DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 462 758	EA 031 623

TITLE	Improving School Efficiency: The Asian Experience. Meeting of the Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning (ANTRIEP) (Colombo, Sri Lanka, December 15-17, 1998). An ANTRIEP Report.
INSTITUTION	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Paris (France). International Inst. for Educational Planning.
SPONS AGENCY	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo.
ISBN	ISBN-92-803-1195-6
PUB DATE	2000-07-00
NOTE	199p.; Organized in cooperation with the Sri Lankan Ministry of Education and Higher Education, with funding from UNESCO Participation Programme.
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Collected Works - Proceedings (021)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Accountability; Decentralization; Educational Improvement; Elementary Secondary Education; Equal Education; Foreign Countries; School Based Management; *School Effectiveness; Teacher Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS	*Australasia; Australia; Bangladesh; India; Korea; Nepal; *Reform Efforts; Sri Lanka

ABSTRACT

Improving the efficiency of schools is a growing concern of educational planners and managers in Asian countries in recent years. The seminar on Improving School Efficiency was convened in December 1998 to address this concern. Seminar topics in this book cover challenges to educational reform, including the introduction of school-based management, which, in turn, engenders changes in the role of central authorities; evaluation of teachers and especially of schools as individual units; and school equity. After the summary, five seminar papers include: "School Autonomy through School-Based Management: The Case of Sri Lanka" (Wilfred J. Perera); "School Autonomy and Efficiency: Some Critical Issues and Lessons" (R. Govinda); "Supervision and Support Services in Five Asian Countries: A Comparative Analysis" (A. De Grauwe); "School Efficiency and Student and School Evaluation in Victoria" (B. Griffiths); and "Evaluation of Primary and Secondary Schools in Korea" (HyunSook Yu). Five annexes contain details about the Improving School Efficiency seminar: opening speech by Professor Wiswa Warnapala, opening statement by G. Carron, seminar program, list of participants, and a list of abbreviations. (Contains 48 references.) (RT)

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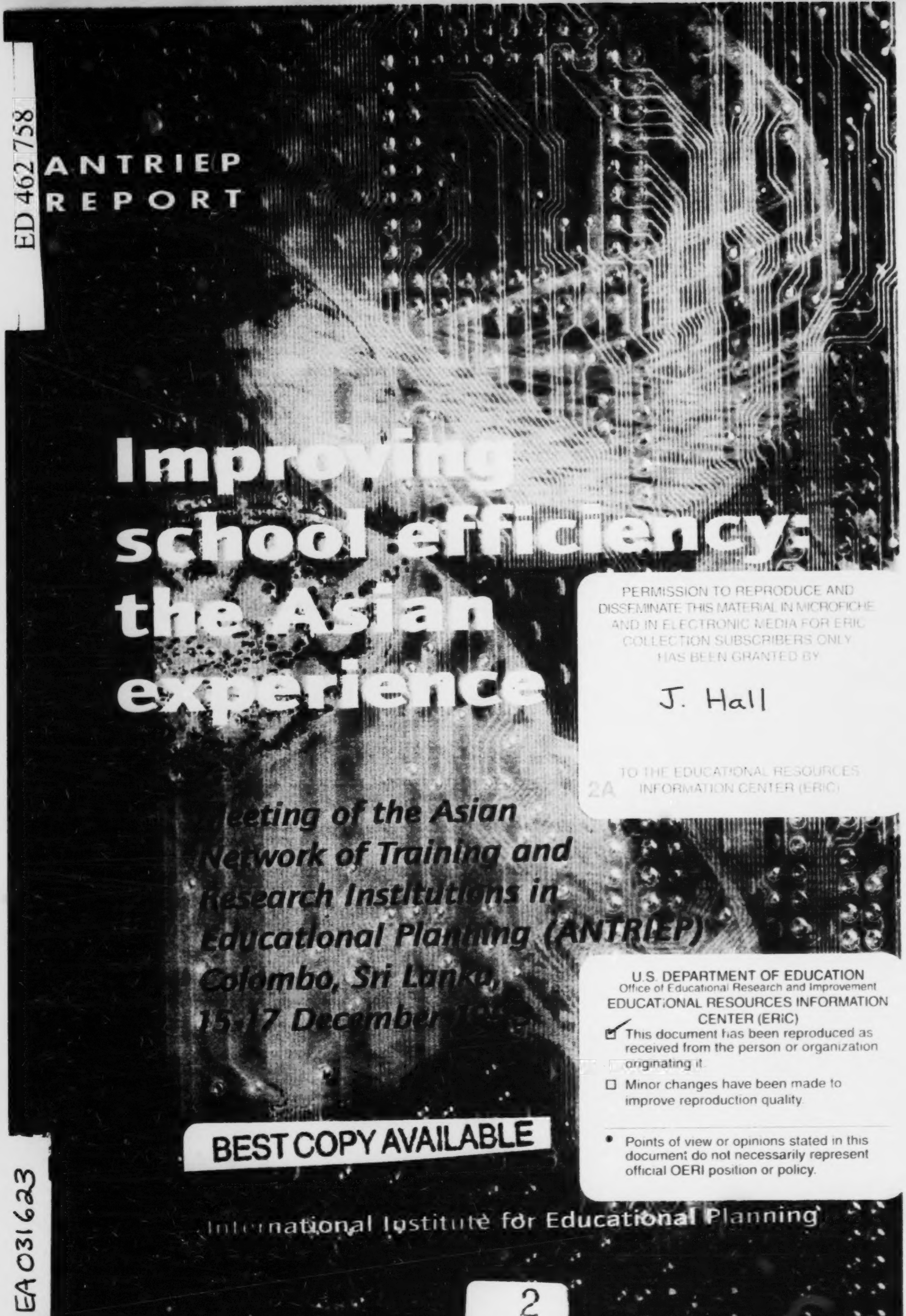

ANTRIEP
REPORT

Improving school efficiency: the Asian experience

Meeting of the Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning (ANTRIEP)
Colombo, Sri Lanka,
15-17 December

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Improving school efficiency: the Asian experience

An ANTRIEP report

Meeting of the
Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions
in Educational Planning
(ANTRIEP)

Colombo, Sri Lanka
15 to 17 December 1998

Paris 2000
UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning

This document is the summary of the discussion of the 1998 Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning (ANTRIEP) meeting. The views and opinions expressed in this volume are those of individual participants in the meeting and should in no way be attributed to UNESCO, the IIEP or to any of the institutions which are members of ANTRIEP.

Financial support was received for the organization of the seminar from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the UNESCO Participation Programme.

This volume has been printed in IIEP's printshop

Cover design by Corinne Hayworth

International Institute for Educational Planning

7 – 9 rue Eugène-Delacroix, 75116 Paris

ISBN: 92-803-1195-6

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Summary

Improving the efficiency of schools is a growing concern of educational planners and managers in recent years. The shift of attention towards strategies which focus on school functioning, rather than the overall education system, is inspired by several considerations. Firstly, reforms have very often targeted the provision of inputs in the system, rather than the processes of teaching and decision-making in particular in schools, which are crucial in explaining differences in quality. Secondly, many reforms in the past tried to focus on isolated components of the system, for instance, the teacher or the textbook. However, improving the efficiency of individual components does not automatically lead to improving an organization. Processes are contextual and their improvement depends upon the capacity of each school to become an effective organization. Thirdly, reforms were not adapted to the very varied needs of the individual schools, characterized as they were by a general, system-wide strategy. Schools do not all function in more or less the same way and reform strategies need to recognize this.

This formed the background to the seminar on *Improving school efficiency*, which the Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning (ANTRIEP) organized in Colombo, in co-operation with the Sri Lankan Ministry of Education and Higher Education, from 15 to 17 December 1998, and on which this publication reports.

The main policy conclusion which some countries have drawn from the above considerations, is that schools need to be given more autonomy. In Sri Lanka, school-based management has now become the official policy, but over the past 20 years authorities have attempted to give more decision-making powers to lower levels, including principals, through, for instance, school clustering or the creation of school boards. The impact of such reforms on the schools was limited, for different reasons: work ethic and attitudes had undergone little change, there was a lack of co-ordination between the different administrative layers and there had been little transfer of real power to the schools. The present reforms therefore focus more on training of staff, especially principals, on the revision of circulars, and on transferring partial authority over finances and over teacher assessment.

The growing autonomy of schools has put into question the role of central authorities. At least three areas, however, remain in most countries the privileged domain of the central Ministry: school supervision, evaluation and assessment, and teacher management.

For supervision to regain credibility, in particular in an environment where schools are receiving more autonomy, profound changes are needed. A greater attention to school supervision rather than to individual teacher inspection and more concentration on giving support to the weakest schools, rather than on administrative control of all schools without distinction, are two of the most needed reforms. But this will not occur automatically: comprehensive and appropriate training and vigorous financing have to accompany any reform. The ideal is to arrive at a service which feels that it is accountable together with schools for their improvement, through, for instance, collaborating around school development plans.

Evaluation is an indispensable task of the central education authorities and serves three different purposes, namely, to comply with administrative demands; to fulfil accountability purposes; and to lead to pedagogical and managerial improvement. In many cases, the administrative evaluation takes precedence over the more developmental one. At the same time, in most countries, evaluation has much more concerned the teachers or the students than the schools. Some changes are occurring in the field of teacher evaluation. In several countries, a closer linkage is sought between assessment of the teacher's performance and the development of a motivational career ladder.

A significant, but still rare, reform concerns the introduction of the evaluation of the school as an individual unit. The Republic of Korea has only recently developed a school evaluation model, which is almost completely external in character. The results of such evaluations are used for planning by supervisors and become the basis for providing financial rewards to superior schools. In the State of Victoria, in Australia, school evaluation combines a long process of self-evaluation with moments of external review. It uses innovative techniques such as staff and parent surveys, as well as a more common performance indicator: test results. Moreover, in its focus on the whole school, it recognizes a key finding of international research into school effectiveness: that effective schools take comprehensive and integrated approaches to improvements in performance.

Both modes of school evaluation encounter a number of challenges. The choice of appropriate indicators is a complex issue.

Allowing for self-selection by schools might help them in their institutional development, but this limits comparison; imposing an externally determined set may compel the school to focus on matters which it does not consider the most important. A second issue relates to the extra workload that school evaluation, even if external, imposes on school personnel. Principals in both Korea and Victoria complain that they might have to give up some of their pedagogical support tasks to fulfil administrative requirements. The issue of ensuring equity in judgements between very different schools is equally difficult to solve.

Even in a decentralized context, where decisions on teacher recruitment and promotion are taken at a district or local level, there remains a need for a general framework defining norms and standards at a national level. But the precise decision on what should remain part of a national framework and what should become the authority of lower levels, including the school headteacher, is intricate. Even in the most decentralized situations, such as in Victoria, the public authorities continue to employ teachers and to pay them along national salary scales. There seem to be good reasons to shift the locus of decision-making on recruitment and career progression to lower levels. It could be considered unfair to hold schools accountable for their results and performance, without giving them the authority to recruit their own staff. Management decisions (on promotion and posting) could arguably best be decided upon by persons who know the real situation and the context of each school. Problems of political interference and of equity have cropped up where such decisions have been decentralized. In any case, decentralized teacher management should not be interpreted as a justification for the recruitment of lower-qualified teachers or for the slackening of standards.

The ultimate justification for a continued and reformed role of central authorities lies in being concerned not only with school efficiency, but with equity between schools.

Improving school efficiency: issues and priorities

Seminar Report

Anton De Grauwe and N.V Varghese**

1. The context

Weaknesses of previous reforms

Strategies to expand access and improve quality of basic education occupy a central place in educational reforms in the developing world. Recent research, both on developed and developing countries, has shown that increased attention needs to be given to action at the school level to improve access to and enhance the quality of education. Reform measures in the past had little emphasis on school intervention and hence many strategies did not achieve their objectives.

Among the most commonly cited weaknesses of previous reforms are the following. Firstly, as noted above, educational policies focused more on changes at the system level than on improvements at the institutional level. It was almost assumed that public policy and provision would automatically lead to an improved performance at the institutional level and hence reform measures placed very little importance on issues related to the functioning of the school. However, this expectation was belied as most schools failed to deliver the goods.

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* Programme Specialist, IIEP.

Secondly, the reforms very often focused mainly on the provision of inputs in the system (e.g. facilities, textbooks) and far less on the processes of teaching and the decision-making, in particular at the school level. Now it is increasingly realized that it is precisely those process variables (variables relating to school organization and practices) which are crucial in explaining differences in quality.

Thirdly, many a reform in the past tried to focus on isolated components of the system. For example, the teacher was seen in an isolated way and competency development programmes were envisaged for teachers independent of the teaching-learning conditions in schools. Now it is recognized that improving the efficiency of individual components does not automatically lead to improving the efficiency of an organization. Processes are contextual and their improvement depends upon the capacity of each school to become an effective organization.

Many reforms were not sufficiently adapted to the very varied needs of the individual schools, characterized as they were by a general, system-wide strategy.

Fourthly, many reforms were not sufficiently adapted to the very varied needs of the individual schools, characterized as they were by a general, system-wide strategy. The implicit hypothesis underlying many plans of action, that all schools function in more or less the same way, is not realistic. There is often not much in common between schools located in a developed urban locality and schools located in remote rural settings. Similarly, the standardized supervision services that exist in most countries rarely adapt their strategies to the needs of specific schools.

A realization of these factors constraining the implementation of reforms has led a growing number of governments to concentrate their improvement efforts at school level. These interventions attempt to take into account the schooling context in general and the characteristics of individual institutions in particular. In many instances, this led to a trend towards school-based management by giving more autonomy to schools. The implementation of such a strategy in those countries which have, for a long time, been characterized by fairly centralized and standardized education systems, implies a reorganization of the management structure as a whole and a redistribution of authority and responsibility between different levels and actors. Against this background, the Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning (ANTRIEP) took the initiative of organizing a regional policy seminar on 'Improving school efficiency'. This seminar took place in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 15 to 17 December 1998.

The seminar

The major objective of the seminar was to provide a forum for educational planners and administrators to share experiences and discuss issues related to school efficiency and the relevant strategies in this regard. Two factors have influenced the identification of the objectives and major discussion themes of the seminar. Firstly, in a growing number of countries of the region, the concept of school autonomy is receiving currency. In some countries, this is the result of a conscious policy by the education authorities to decentralize more responsibility to the schools; in others, it is the result of resource-saving efforts where

The major objective of the seminar was to provide a forum for educational planners and administrators to share experiences and discuss issues related to school efficiency.

increasing responsibilities are left to the schools without the central or provincial levels providing the necessary resources and support. Secondly, irrespective of trends towards school autonomy in almost all countries, the central level relies on three specific management functions to monitor and improve school efficiency, namely supervision, evaluation and assessment, and teacher management.

Consequently, the seminar aimed at the following four objectives, related to the factors identified above:

- give an overview of the situation of different countries in Asia, with regard to school autonomy (Theme 1);
- examine how both external and in-school supervision and support services should be strengthened and adapted to have a positive impact on the quality of schools (Theme 2);
- explore the role that evaluation mechanisms (examinations, achievement tests and others) can play in improving the quality and effectiveness of schools (Theme 3);
- discuss the system of teacher deployment and management, and ask at what levels different decisions about deploying and managing teachers can best be taken and how this decision process can be improved (Theme 4).

Participants in the seminar on school efficiency consisted of top-level decision-makers from Ministries of Education in the Asian region, senior staff from ANTRIEP member institutions, and experts and specialists from various agencies and organizations. The complete list of participants as well as the programme are given in the annexes.

The discussions in the seminar started with a general examination of the trends towards school autonomy in the region.

Participants exchanged experiences of countries that are moving in the direction of school-based or school-site management. In this respect, special attention was given to the key role which the headteacher is expected to play and to the potential contribution of communities to ensure school autonomy in practice. This was followed by discussions on policies and strategies to strengthen supervision, evaluation and assessment, and teacher management practices presently prevailing in these countries.

The redistribution of roles and responsibilities between different actors and levels of decision-making was one of the central concerns in the debates. The sessions generally started with a formal presentation on a theme followed by a case study of an innovative experience, and ended with an open plenary discussion. Group work on specific themes further enriched the seminar deliberations. This group work helped in discussing alternative intervention strategies in varying contexts.

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The following paragraphs provide a résumé of the debates on each theme which figured on the seminar's agenda.

2. School efficiency and school autonomy

This topic was covered in two plenary sessions followed by group work. In the first plenary session, the present policy of the seminar's host country, Sri Lanka, was presented (see Contribution 1). The ensuing discussions led to an exchange of experiences and a more general presentation on school autonomy and school efficiency (see Contribution 2). The *second plenary session formed an introduction to the group work, with two presentations, relating respectively to the role of the headteacher and to the participation of communities. These themes were then taken up in group work.*

On defining 'school efficiency'

School efficiency can be defined in terms of three commonly found factors. First, efficient schools are those which obtain good outcomes, in terms of examination results. This operational definition makes it easy to quantify efficiency because examination results are a measurable entity. However, it may have negative implications as far as the school processes are concerned. In order to be efficient, schools may tend to be examination-orientated which is hardly a welcome feature, especially at the primary level. Secondly, efficient schools are those which are well managed. This definition focuses on the internal management of the school. It starts with the belief that any school is efficient where the interaction between different stakeholders is cordial and mutually reinforcing so that the teachers are happy to teach, parents are willing to send their children to school, and children enjoy the learning process. Thirdly, efficient schools are those which give good results at a reasonable cost, affordable to the society as a whole and to the different individuals in that society. In this definition, it is the cost and equity considerations which are dominant. A closer look at these definitions indicates four dimensions of efficiency, namely, focus on outcomes, favourable internal management, cost-effectiveness and equity. Needless to add, all these four dimensions should be an integral part of an efficient school.

> Four dimensions of efficiency, namely, focus on outcomes, favourable internal management, cost-effectiveness and equity, should be an integral part of an efficient school.

The link with school autonomy

While defining school efficiency is a hard task, determining what precisely is covered by the term 'school autonomy' is probably even more intricate. On a fairly general level, it is not too difficult to arrive at some agreement: school autonomy implies the relative independence of an institution in its operation, to carry out commonly agreed goals, with a view to making it function more efficiently and effectively.

Three points need to be stressed in this regard. Firstly, the policy to offer schools more decision-making power is essentially seen by its advocates as a mechanism to improve school efficiency, although both literature reviews and country experiences have shown that such a link remains elusive. Secondly, public central authorities will continue to provide a framework and play a regulatory role in establishing norms for provision and quality assurance while the actual interventions to improve efficiency will need to be introduced at the school level and in the classrooms. Thirdly, independence of schools is relative and contextual. The level of development of a country and the type and size of a school are among the more obvious factors to consider. Furthermore, there is no optimal locus for decision-making on education which applies to all countries or all schools. Nowhere does school autonomy imply total independence. It generally implies operational freedom to organize and galvanize school and community resources to make its functioning more efficient and cost-effective. But the translation of this principle into reality leads to many different scenarios. The varied terminology in vogue in the wake of the

> There is no optimal locus for decision-making on education which applies to all countries or all schools.

school autonomy movement – school-based management, school-site management, local-level management, self-management of schools – shows the wide spectrum of experiences and varied patterns of school autonomy.

While many governments in the region now toy with the idea of autonomy for schools, very limited effort has been made to operationalize the idea, and in particular to offer a comprehensive answer to the key question: which level will be responsible for which issues? At present, the existing circulars are more constraining than enabling. It seems that, if schools are to be made more autonomous and responsive to local requirements, decisions in three crucial areas become important: (i) curriculum; (ii) examination and performance evaluation; and (iii) finances.

In each of these areas, participants discussed arguments both for and against transferring decision-making authority to the schools. Local-level curriculum development would allow for a more relevant, more adapted school and would enable teachers to become even more active partners. The case of the State of Victoria in Australia shows that curriculum development at the local level is feasible. However, many other countries face at least two fundamental problems. Given their multicultural and multiracial composition and the resulting diversities, the curriculum content is a sensitive issue, not least politically. Public education is precisely expected to play the role of uniting the nation and therefore a strict curriculum framework is imposed. Moreover, many countries do not have adequate capacity to facilitate curriculum development at the local level.

Autonomy in curriculum development is evidently linked to the issue of examinations and, in wider terms, performance evaluation. The backwash effect which national examination systems can have on classroom teaching is well known. Keeping the examination system centrally designed and directed immediately restricts the freedom of schools. On the other hand, such a restriction might well be necessary when schools receive more autonomy so as to effectively control their quality.

School autonomy does not mean withdrawal of funding support by the state. In fact many of the educationally backward regions are also economically deprived and hence these regions will not be in a position to mobilize sufficient resources to provide quality education to all its population. Therefore continued funding support by the state is a necessary condition for making these schools more efficient and functional. Only the state can look into concerns for equity from a broader perspective. In other words, the state has to continue with the funding support precisely when one is arguing for school autonomy.

The major problem lies in the fact that the existing funding arrangements and flow mechanisms in the region neither promote school autonomy nor the efficient use of resources at school level. Schools operate with no claim on and little control over their finances. The funds come from the government, through the administrative channels, in a very restricted item-wise accounting fashion. Generally the provision is in terms of teachers, equipment etc. rather than in financial flows. The public authorities, from a purely administrative point of view, normally presuppose a uniform system of education to allow for a uniform pattern of spending.

> The existing funding arrangements and flow mechanisms in the region neither promote school autonomy nor the efficient use of resources at school level.

A more meaningful strategy would be to give schools a block-grant, based partly on enrolments, and to confer on headteachers the authority to re-allocate the funds for various school activities within certain limits. But for such funding mechanisms not to impact negatively on equity, the context and needs of each school have to be taken into account. Therefore, the basis for a funding formula cannot simply be a function of enrolment, but should reflect the special and specific requirements of the area where the school in question is located, the quality and expertise of its staff, the number of children with learning difficulties, and so on. The complexity of developing such a needs-based resource allocation system can easily be imagined, especially in countries where information on social issues is scarce. In addition, the capacity of school heads to manage these funds cannot be taken for granted.

An intermediate solution lies in providing schools with limited funds to implement specific school improvement projects which are conceived of and developed by the schools themselves. They can range from the construction of extra rooms or the setting up of a school library, to the organization of an in-school teacher-training project. Ideally, there should be a link with the elaboration by all staff of a school improvement plan. This approach is being used by the Philippines, as part of the Third Elementary Education Project, through the *School Improvement and Innovation Facility*.

The key actor: the headteacher

The extent of autonomy effectively enjoyed by a school depends upon the headteacher of the school. The efficiency and authority of the headteacher in turn depends upon the process of selection. Traditionally, headteachers used to be selected based on their seniority in the system, with little regard to their efficiency

In Malaysia, every teacher with five years of experience can apply to become a headteacher and all candidates are screened on the basis of a complex set of criteria in order to arrive at the best match between headteacher profile and school profile.

and competency. However, a trend noticeable in many countries in the recent past is that, in the selection process, teaching experience remains an essential requirement but seniority is only one criterion among others. This is the case for instance in Bhutan and in Malaysia. In the latter country, every teacher with five years of experience can apply and all candidates are screened on the basis of a complex set of criteria (including personality structure, capacity to grow, and different generic skills), in order to arrive at the best match between headteacher profile and school profile. Furthermore, as part of the programme *Making schools effective*, after recruitment headteachers are given orientation training in issues related to institutional planning and management. In the context of school autonomy, it is very important that headteachers are in a position to provide academic leadership to work with their staff on school development plans and that they are trained in budgetary processes so that the school activities can be prioritized, initiated and closely monitored. This is all the more important in a situation where autonomy also implies freedom to operate the funds allocated to schools.

In some instances it is found that headteachers, rather than becoming pedagogical leaders, are more comfortable with the label of administrators. Many believe that a close identification with administration may reinforce their authority to influence and control teachers. However, under such circumstances the headteacher becomes almost a subordinate to the departmental functionaries. This may have a negative implication as far as school autonomy is concerned. In other words, even when school autonomy is guaranteed in the regulations, the extent of autonomy enjoyed by the school will depend on the ability of the headteacher to exercise authority and independence in decisions on issues related to the functioning of the school.

The participants highlighted that it will be of crucial importance that the headteacher be capable of bringing the whole school staff together around one objective: to improve the school in all its aspects. The existence of such a positive school climate should not be taken for granted, neither should the resistance within schools themselves against more autonomy be underestimated. In some cases, headteachers are apprehensive of the additional authority they receive and especially the accompanying accountability. In other cases, teachers do not look forward to seeing an increase in the power of the school principal, especially in the field of teacher supervision and discipline. While training undoubtedly is needed, arguably more important will be a change in mindset among all the partners, in and around the school.

Capacity building should involve neither individual headteachers nor some selected teachers but the school staff as a whole.

Thus school autonomy will imply the need to focus on the school as a unit so as to effect changes in the way schools are functioning. This implies, for instance, that capacity building should involve neither individual headteachers nor some selected teachers, but the school staff as a whole. School-based capacity building may therefore be more appropriate than headteacher-training programmes.

Strengthening authority of headteachers cannot be divorced from issues related to improving their competency, to strengthening mechanisms for monitoring school activities and to developing indicators, comparable across institutions, for evaluating school efficiency. Arguably, most important will be the overall management structure of the education system. In many countries, several fundamental decisions regarding school functioning are taken at higher levels. For example, issues related to curriculum, textbooks, teacher recruitment, posting and other provisions for schools are still decided at regional or central level. One may have to re-negotiate these arrangements to provide a more conducive atmosphere for schools to function better.

The role of the community in strengthening internal school management

Participants focused attention on community participation as another important factor influencing internal management and operational efficiency of schools. Experience has shown that schools function better and students improve their achievement scores when communities, and parents in particular, are actively involved in the planning and management of school activities. In several countries school management committees have representation from parents and the community at large. However, it is important to decide in advance what precisely is the role and responsibility of communities in school management.

Many a time it is not possible to make a blueprint for the functioning of the community organizations at the local level because communities are very diverse, even within the same country. As such, there is undoubtedly a need for a diversified approach, maybe even a diversified legislation. But is it feasible to expect legislation to adapt itself to the different contexts? Some way of addressing this problem lies in making a distinction between types of school (government-owned, set up by local community, private) by levels (primary, secondary) and by location (rural, semi-urban, urban).

In any case, it is crucial to specify areas of community involvement and levels of involvement. There are some areas where community involvement is more easy, evident and prevalent, for instance financial and/or resource contribution and the supervision of teacher attendance. But even these are not without problems. The possibly negative impact on equity of the first strategy is well known. With respect to the second strategy, one can wonder what purpose it serves to allow communities to supervise teacher assiduity, if they cannot take any disciplinary action. The task is more difficult if communities are to play a role in areas such as curriculum development or teacher recruitment. While interaction with and consultation of communities is important to develop a locally relevant curriculum, curriculum development by communities can be a difficult, if not an impossible, task, especially where literacy levels are low and local capacity poorly developed. Thus the importance of drawing a line of demarcation between areas where communities can be actively involved and areas where communities are not to be involved beyond a point.

It is important to decide in advance what precisely is the role and responsibility of communities in school management and to specify areas and levels of community involvement.

When referring to levels of community involvement, one needs to distinguish between information, consultation, negotiation and decision-making. The participants affirmed that there is little controversy about the need to keep the community informed (although for instance the publication of school supervision reports is acceptable in few countries so far) or to consult with it regarding some decisions, such as the location of a new school. The fundamental interrogation, which is raised, but is far from being resolved, concerns the real decision-making power given to communities.

In many countries there is a lack of clear legislation, empowering communities to participate in the local management of schools and defining what are the roles and responsibilities of communities and of the other partners.

In any context, communities can play a positive role. Unfortunately, their potential has not been fully exploited. Factors constraining community participation are many. Participants identified the following five as the most important. Firstly, in many countries there is a lack of clear legislation, empowering communities to participate in the local management of schools and defining what are the roles and responsibilities of communities and of the other partners. In the absence of such an appropriate legal framework, the administration may not be inclined to share its authority. Secondly, many countries have not yet developed suitable and efficient structures, which allow communities to be involved in schools. Thirdly, the problem is compounded by the fact that, very often, democratic decision-making processes are not deep-rooted in local social interactions. Therefore, ensuring democratic representation and functioning is an important concern while promoting local-based management of schools. Fourthly, and linked very much to the previous point, people's participation at the local level cannot be divorced from local politics. In the seminar, many participants expressed the fear of increased political interference if local communities are organized to improve schools. Fifthly, for successful and sustained community participation, there is a need to develop local capacity to discuss and orient the activities. Efforts to form local organizations to improve community participation in the absence of efforts to build local capacity can be frustrating, if not counter-productive.

Therefore, to ensure stronger school-community relations, with a positive impact on school effectiveness, national authorities should take action in three core fields. Firstly, evolving legislation to provide a legal framework, defining with some precision the role and contribution of communities. The legislation should not constrain communities nor limit their creativity. Therefore it should be as minimal as possible, providing a framework to operate rather than imposing restrictions. Secondly, developing appropriate structures. Many countries have set up some structures, such as parent-teacher associations or school management committees, with representations from the community. However, few have led so far to a real involvement of communities. Their membership, their constitution (should they be elected or appointed?), their relationship with the more official educational administration, and their localization in the hierarchy (should they be set up for each school, for a cluster, for a village or district?) are some of the elements which might need to be rethought. Thirdly, organizing orientation programmes to create awareness among communities and capacity among them to participate more actively and effectively in matters related to managing schools.

3. School efficiency and school supervision

The discussions on this topic started with two presentations, the first by the IIEP on the results of a project, implemented in co-operation with ANTRIEP member institutions, on Improving supervision and support services for basic *education in five Asian countries (see Contribution 3) and a second on the supervision strategy, which forms part of the Non-Formal Education programme of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee. These presentations were followed by a general discussion in plenary.*

Many counties in the region are more familiar with school inspection as an administrative exercise than an academic activity. Much of the personnel in the supervision services have therefore adopted a control- and discipline-oriented attitude. In recent times, however, one recognizes that what schools require is more academic supervision and support. Therefore, there is a need for the supervisors to change their attitudes and strategies. It is to be recognized that the present, control- and visit-orientated supervision has almost no impact on the improvement of schools. Supervisors have very often been remembered more for their authoritarian attitude than for their supportive role in providing academic guidance to teachers. It is better understood now that there is a need for change and such a change will not happen automatically. It requires reforms both in the description of activities which supervisors are expected to undertake and in their attitude. Presently, the main activity on their job description - and the one by which their performance is judged - is school visits. The studies carried out within the IIEP-ANTRIEP project clearly showed why such visits have become more rare and more administrative in character. In addition, visits often concern the schools which are less in need of

Maybe the idea that inspectors should visit all schools regularly and without discrimination should be abandoned in favour of a selective approach and of activities which involve supervisors in a more developmental attitude, such as teacher training, demonstration classes, assisting with school development plans and so on.

supervision, but which are closer to the headquarters. Maybe the idea that inspectors should visit all schools regularly and without discrimination should be abandoned in favour of a selective approach and of activities which involve supervisors in a more developmental attitude, such as teacher training, demonstration classes, assisting with school development plans and so on.

Ideally, the present method of evaluating supervisors, namely by looking at the number of visits made and of reports written, should be replaced by a system of accountability, which judges supervisors on the basis of the impact their work has on schools. The practical problems with implementing such a scheme are obvious: how to judge the efficiency of a school, how to separate the impact of supervisors from other factors, how to ensure that such a system is fairly implemented and that it does not de-motivate supervisors who are working against the odds.

Even if supervisors adopt a more developmental behaviour, their impact on schools will remain limited, because of their inherent external character. They remain outsiders. Supervision and support should therefore start within the school. Headteachers evidently play a crucial role, but the peer support which teachers can give each other is just as important. Research has indeed shown that teachers learn more easily from each other than from outsiders. This might demand a change in the internal management structures of schools. Secondary schools in many cases already adopt such an approach, by setting up departments with their own heads for groups of subjects. More problematic is the introduction of such a strategy in smaller primary schools, where at times there is not even an official headteacher. Many countries have therefore set up the well-known school clusters but the results of clusters are mixed. The seminar did not focus on this issue, but stressed the need to prevent this cluster system from developing into a new administrative layer, through the demands of central authorities.

The fact that in-school strategies are essential does not imply that external interventions can be done away with. Many schools do not have at present the human resources, in numbers or in experience, to set up a sustainable and helpful internal supervision and support system. But even where schools are well functioning and have the necessary qualified staff, supervisors can play two roles: on the one hand, to be the go-between, communicating schools' needs to regional and central authorities and informing schools of central policy initiatives; and on the other hand, exchanging experiences and successful interventions between schools. In other words, improving internal management of the schools and providing better support to the teachers within the school cannot entirely replace the system of external supervision. Each strategy has a distinct and mutually reinforcing role to play.

External supervisors should be as close as possible to the schools so as to allow them to give consistent and continued support. This implies that the staff, who do the daily work of visiting schools, training teachers, demonstrating good practice and exchanging successful experiences, should be plentiful and operate close to the school. At higher levels, including the central Ministry, supervision services could be small, focusing mainly on developing overall supervision policies and guidelines and probably organizing training in supervision. In other words, the system should be top-light and bottom-heavy.

Many of the problems with which supervisors struggle at present will not be resolved if the strategic and structural changes

Many of the problems will not be resolved if the strategic and structural changes are not accompanied by a commitment to give these services the minimum funding they need to be functional.

are not accompanied by a commitment to give these services the minimum funding they need to be functional. The most evident need of supervisors is for transport. In the absence of vehicles or of the necessary allowances, supervisors are condemned to remain in their offices. This is sadly regularly the case and, not surprisingly, supervisors in such a situation lose commitment and motivation. To this deplorable picture, a positive message can nevertheless be attached: the additional funding needed is marginal compared to the overall education budget, while the benefits that it would bring could be important.

When sufficiently funded, supervision can become a key factor in improving education. The example of the Non-Formal Education programme of BRAC is enlightening. Supervision receives between a quarter and a third of the total budget, to some extent because the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) works with relatively low-paid teachers. The BRAC example also shows that financing is not sufficient unless it is accompanied by a number of mutually supportive interventions.

BRAC's supervision strategy has several characteristics which are attractive for the formal education system. Its supervision service is strongly decentralized: the main actors, the Programme Organizers, have responsibility for a small number of schools, which they visit about twice every week and where their role is that of a headteacher and not that of an external inspector. As such, the Programme Organizer is co-responsible with the school's teacher for the success and the weaknesses of the pupils (schools have in principle only one teacher and around 30 pupils). Their relationship is more of a collegial nature than hierarchical. The visits by the Programme Organizers have relatively little to do with administration, but concentrate on assistance in classroom teaching. The Programme Organizers themselves benefit from strong and regular support by their superiors, the Field Officers, who in turn can count on their superiors for the necessary assistance. In addition, there is close collaboration between School Management Committees (SMCs), parents, community leaders and teachers. Each school has an SMC which is responsible for the smooth running of the school. The committee in consultation with the parents maintains and protects the school, sets the school time and vacation time. Well-attended parent meetings are held every month in each school. The Programme Organizer facilitates these meetings and takes follow-up measures. The participation of parents is so high partly due to the fact that the BRAC schools are established according to the demands of the community, after confirming their demand in a group meeting with the community. Hence community involvement is solicited and ensured at all stages in the establishment and functioning of schools.

4. School efficiency and school evaluation

Presentations on school evaluation in the Republic of Korea (Contribution 4) and in the State of Victoria in Australia (Contribution 5) introduced the sessions on this topic. The discussions took place in two groups: a first on Evaluating schools in a context of growing autonomy, *a second on* Monitoring schools through indicator systems. *The following paragraphs summarize the overall conclusions from the discussions and from the two group proceedings.*

Evaluation of any organization is a necessary strategy, almost a pre-condition to monitor its functioning and therefore to improve its efficiency. Unfortunately, evaluation is at times reduced to an exercise in fault finding. To be effective and acceptable, evaluation should be seen more in terms of supporting the existing staff in schools to attain higher levels of efficiency, both in individual actions and collective functioning, in order to improve the efficiency of the school as an organization.

Evaluation serves three different purposes, namely, to comply with administrative demands; to fulfil accountability purposes; and to lead to pedagogical and managerial improvement. The types of evaluation, implemented to serve these three purposes, do not necessarily go hand in hand. In many cases, the administrative evaluation takes precedence over the more developmental one.

In the field of education, evaluation has generally been restricted to teacher and student evaluation, respectively through inspection and examinations. Little attention has been given to the evaluation of the school as a unit. In addition, in most countries, the link between teacher and student evaluation and school efficiency is hazy, if not non-existent. Teacher evaluation has in many countries become an administrative ritual or an exercise with an excessive control focus, linked to individual promotion rather than the promotion of the quality of the school or the system. Student evaluation mainly serves selection purposes, but includes too little systematic feedback to lead to quality improvement.

Some changes are occurring in the field of teacher evaluation. In several countries, a closer linkage is sought between evaluation of the teacher's competence and performance and the development

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of a motivational career ladder. The criticism that promotion is too strongly based on qualifications and years of experience rather than the quality of teaching is not new. The Maldives has set up a rather ambitious teacher evaluation system, which takes into account the academic performance of the teacher's students (their score at O-level examinations) and includes a performance appraisal. This appraisal, which is undertaken by the headteacher, looks at several aspects: the amount of work undertaken, the quality of the work, the efficiency of a teacher's contribution to the teaching-learning process, and other matters such as leadership, team work and inter-personal skills. In the same way, in Indonesia, the old system of automatic promotion every four years has been replaced by a credit point system which allows teachers to be promoted more rapidly. Sri Lanka has gone in a slightly different direction by developing a strategy of teacher self-evaluation. Teachers are asked at the beginning of the year to define, in consultation with the headteacher, their own plans and objectives for the whole school year. Throughout the year and at the end, the teacher will judge his or her own performance, when compared to these objectives. As such, the external control element is virtually absent from this type of evaluation and has made place for a concern with self-improvement.

As mentioned above, school evaluation, as distinct from teacher and student evaluation, is non-existent in most countries. The example of Victoria is an innovative and apparently successful exception but it is not completely without problems. One complaint voiced in particular by headteachers is that the annual self-review puts great stress on the school management and increases the workload of headteachers, who might have to give up some of their more pedagogical support tasks to fulfil what are administrative requirements.

It is useful to keep in mind the distinction between self-evaluation and external evaluation. On the one hand, evaluation for school improvement with the objective of identifying actions to be taken at the school level needs to be school-based, in other words will be a self-evaluation. On the other hand, evaluation of the system as a whole, in order to effect system-level changes, will be undertaken at a higher level. This needs evaluation of several schools and may be initiated by people in the individual schools but will undoubtedly include others. Such external evaluation will rely on a standard evaluation, according to an externally designed format.

Indicators on performance of schools can be used to compare different schools at any given point of time or to monitor school activities over a period of time, if data on major activities are collected at regular intervals. When schools undertake self-evaluation, this can be done on the basis of a self-selected set of indicators, limiting the possibilities of comparison, or with reference to an externally determined set, maybe compelling the school to focus on matters which it does not consider the most important.

This brings us to the issue of the choice of indicators to evaluate schools. To make comparative statements, we need to develop reliable indicators. Examination results are the most popular indicator to judge the efficiency of a school, especially by parents and the authorities. Very often, the teachers are not happy with relying on examination results as a proxy for teacher quality. This attitude is not simply an expression of their resistance to evaluation, but the reflection of the realization that examination results are a poor indicator of a teacher's quality. Evaluation of school activity obviously should not be confined only to student performance in the examinations. One has to develop other reliable indicators for assessing a broader concept of school efficiency and for monitoring progress.

One of the challenges lies in identifying qualitative indicators which can be quantified. Therefore, methods of evaluation will have to focus not only on quantitative data collection, but also on qualitative information collected through discussions, observation, interviews etc.

Ideally, one should look for indicators which can assess system-level efficiency and school-level efficiency simultaneously. Such indicators should evaluate both quantitative and qualitative aspects. The quantitative indicators provide a comparative picture and relative position of the school in a given administrative unit. Indicators like enrolment ratio, learner achievement levels, qualification and training levels of teachers, attendance rates etc. are among the quantitative indicators which are available in most countries. However, process indicators which reflect more accurately what goes on in the classrooms and are qualitative in nature are more difficult to find. One of the challenges lies in identifying qualitative indicators which can be quantified. Therefore, methods of evaluation will have to focus not only on quantitative data collection, but also on qualitative information collected through discussions, observation, interviews etc. At the school level these discussions and interactions may become more important than quantitative data to arrive at decisions regarding functioning and efficiency of schools.

5. School efficiency and teacher management

This session was organized in conjunction with an IIEP workshop on Teacher Management. It consisted of a plenary discussion, starting from a round table presenting different points of view.

Even in a decentralized context, where decisions on teacher recruitment and promotion are taken at a district or local level, there will remain a need for a general framework, for a set of checks and balances at a national level. Even in the most decentralized situations, such as in Victoria (Australia), the public authorities continue to employ teachers and to pay them along national salary scales. In the same way, the issue of centralization or decentralization should be seen as separate from that of teacher qualifications and standards. In other words, a decentralized recruitment should not be interpreted as a justification for the recruitment of lower-qualified teachers or for the slackening of standards.

Political interference in teacher management, in particular in recruitment and posting, is a problem encountered in many countries. The mechanisms and strategies to reduce such interference are context-specific. This implies that decentralization, allowing local involvement in teacher management, will not automatically turn around this reality. In several countries, it might actually make the situation worse.

The recruitment at local level of teachers belonging to the community might lead to an increased sense of belonging and a greater commitment among these teachers. This seems to some extent conditioned by two factors. These teachers, if they feel abandoned, once appointed, might quickly lose such commitment. It is important that they are given an opportunity to improve themselves and to grow professionally, e.g. through in-service training. Secondly, the usefulness of such a strategy also depends on the economic context. Where few job opportunities are available for secondary school or university graduates, it might be easier to attract some to the teaching profession than when there are many.

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Professional development of teachers and the accompanying management decisions (on promotion and posting) could arguably best be decided upon by persons who know the real situation and the context. But this might give birth to problems of accountability. The question thus remains of how to develop accountability systems which are acceptable to all and which, at the same time, take into account the different context of each school.

Finally, the point was made regarding how far it would be fair to hold schools accountable for their results, for their performance, without giving them the authority to recruit their staff as they think best.

6. Summary and conclusions

Reforms in the recent past, which focused on interventions at the system level, have seldom, if ever, achieved their objective of improving the school and the classroom. Most countries have therefore come to the conclusion that directing their efforts towards school level is important to improve operational efficiency in schools. In many countries a focus on schools and their activities has led to seeking more autonomy for schools. This demands a re-organization of the management structure and a redistribution of authority and responsibility at different layers of educational administration. In any case, the extent of autonomy enjoyed by the school will depend upon continued funding support by the state and the leadership role of the headteacher.

Smooth relationships between the school and the community are essential in order to improve school management and school efficiency. There are different organizational arrangements to facilitate community participation. In some countries, parent-teacher associations are active, in others, school management committees are formed and, in certain instances, local-based committees are created. The experiences from different countries reveal that interventions on three counts are instrumental to make community participation an effective channel: providing a legal framework for local participation, creating structures for participation and training and orientation programmes to develop local capacity.

There is a need to move from a control-based and visit-oriented inspection system to a mechanism providing innovative supervision and support to schools where needed. The idea that supervisors need to be more involved with teacher training, demonstration classes, to assist the schools to evolve development plans etc. is gaining momentum. A substantial part of what is now the job of the supervisor (e.g. regular teacher inspection) can be replaced by strengthening internal management of schools, i.e. internal and local monitoring systems. Unfortunately, developing countries invest too little in supervision activities to make them effective. The BRAC example from Bangladesh indicated that when a well-designed programme and logistic support are provided, supervision can play a key role in improving school efficiency.

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School evaluation is an essential tool towards improving school efficiency. The most commonly carried out evaluation is student evaluations based on the marks scored in examinations. Relying heavily on student evaluation alone may not help in identifying factors influencing school efficiency. Therefore there is a need to evolve mechanisms to evaluate schools as a unit or organization. Unfortunately, few reliable indicators have yet been developed to evaluate schools. The available indicators measure the efficiency at the system level and are too purely quantitative. School evaluation requires developing qualitative indicators and collecting information on qualitative dimensions. In this context, it is important to make a distinction between self-evaluation and external evaluation. Self-evaluation is more useful for directing action to be taken at the school level and external evaluation may be more useful to effect changes at the system level. Both are needed to improve the education system. The external evaluation may rely more on quantitative data, whereas self-evaluation may rely more on qualitative information collected through discussion, observation, interview etc.

One of the areas of tension is the evaluation of teacher quality and the management of the teaching staff in general. While the teachers function at the school level, almost all decisions regarding them such as recruitment, transfer and promotion, are taken at higher levels. There is a need to develop teacher accountability systems which can be monitored locally. However, the impacts this will have on the relationship between the headteacher and the teaching staff and on the workload of the headteacher are difficult to evaluate now.

The seminar arrived at the following conclusions:

- School autonomy is indeed on the agenda in a good number of countries, but starting from different rationales. Many participants pointed out that, so far, no clear linkage can be found between school autonomy and school efficiency. More important considerations in the policy towards school autonomy are probably an expectation that this would release additional resources and a general distrust of the efficiency of government initiatives.

- This does not imply that there are not any good planning or pedagogical arguments to give schools more decision-making power. Experiences from all countries around the table confirmed that the most beneficial evaluation and supervision strategies start at the school site. The decentralization of teacher management to the school level can also have a positive impact on school efficiency, but the politicization of the teacher recruitment processes, at present a reality in many countries, might get worse.

- School autonomy can take many different forms. Three models were identified: the school as the last level in the hierarchical set-up; the school as the primary unit for improvement with little or no intermediate structures between the school and the central authority; and the school as part of local clustering. The core question 'Who decides about what aspect of school functioning?' is being answered in diverse ways in different countries. In addition, it is evident that schools themselves contain distinct actors who do not interpret more autonomy in exactly the same way.

- One of the key issues relates to the impact of school autonomy on the other administrative levels between the central level and the school. The continued existence of these levels in many countries seriously limits the school autonomy. But the weakening, if not the complete dismemberment of these levels (as was done in Victoria) is not only politically very difficult, but could also have detrimental effects on the weaker, smaller schools. School clustering, as is done in many countries, forms a partial answer to this dilemma but this strategy was little discussed at the seminar.

- The country experiences also led to the question of which approach to follow when introducing school autonomy: should it follow an incremental strategy, with all the risks of obstruction attached, or should it be a radical move, with the accompanying risk of non-preparedness of the main actors, the headteachers.

School autonomy through school-based management: the case of Sri Lanka

*Wilfred. J. Perera**

Introduction

The school system in Sri Lanka is a vast enterprise with 4.2 million students and 190,000 teachers. The teachers account for nearly one-fourth of the entire civil service. Sri Lanka's education system is unique in its efforts to introduce new innovations. In 1945, a free education scheme from kindergarten to university was introduced. This was followed by the adoption of the local language as the medium of instruction. In the 1940s a special category of schools, known as 'central schools', was established in distant cities to provide students from villages with equally good education as the privileged. In the late 1950s and 1960s, the teaching of science was extended to secondary grades of better schools in the rural areas, until then limited exclusively to a few privileged urban schools. In the early 1960s, practically all private schools were brought under the control of the state. To move away from the academic curriculum, wide reforms were introduced in 1972, life skills in 1984 and continuous assessment in 1986. The cluster school system was introduced in 1981 and School Development Boards in 1993. The country also introduced several welfare measures at regular intervals, e.g. scholarships for children from low-income families, free textbooks and midday meals to all, a free uniform scheme and subsidized bus fares. Although some of the innovations were short-lived, the efforts made were exceptional.

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1. Two decades of efforts to strengthen school autonomy

The 1979 report 'Towards relevance in education'

The 1979 report 'Towards relevance in education' recognized for the first time that reform measures had not succeeded in achieving the goals and hence large numbers of children left school long before they had learned anything worth while.

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The educational authorities had realized, even as far back as 1979, that schools can do better when they do not feel imprisoned by national directives. The 1979 report of the Education Reform Committee (published in 1982) stated:

"There is no denying that some of our schools possess a wide variety of talents and excellence. The uniform application of policy in all schools alike, however, has tended to heighten rather than heal the imbalances between the developed and under-developed sections of the system, while national standards in management, discipline and quality of education have remained stagnant… The prescribing of uniform curricula, textbooks and examination standards on an all-island scale has had adverse effects. It has succeeded not in educating all the children of the nation but in driving large numbers of children out of school long before they could achieve anything worth while from their education. Teachers, however sympathetic and understanding of the individual differences and capabilities of their pupils, have little freedom to deviate from the official examination requirements which at best will benefit only about 10 per cent of the candidate population" (Ministry of Education, 1982, pp. 27 and 30).

This committee's report recommended a three-point strategy in order to improve school functioning. These strategies were: "(i) recognition of the key role of heads of schools; (ii) reduction of the very wide gap between the smallest and poorest equipped remote school with perhaps 20-30 pupils, at the one end, and the fully equipped very large 'Royal College' category, at the other; (iii) the need to foster greater community participation in the management of schools". And the report goes on, stating: "In regard to this, it is necessary to evolve a plan whereby schools or school complexes are encouraged to move in the direction of managing their own affairs to an increasingly greater extent, as they show their willingness and capacity to shoulder such responsibilities" (ibid., p. 35).

"It is necessary to evolve a plan whereby schools or school complexes are encouraged to move in the direction of managing their own affairs to an increasingly greater extent, as they show their willingness and capacity to shoulder such responsibilities" (Ministry of Education, 1982).

The committee recommended decentralization as a strategy to improve school functioning. In its view, "Decentralization must mean not only the devolution of the responsibility but also the devolution of the necessary authority and this right down to the head of the school" (ibid., p. 38). The role of the principal was envisaged even in the selection and transfer of teachers.

The cluster system

Following these recommendations, the 1981 'Education Proposals for Reform' (Ministry of Education, 1981), widely known as the white paper, proposed the introduction of school clusters. Schools within a defined geographical area were grouped together for better organization, management and development. The cluster was a fully-fledged administrative unit, having a leader of its own (principal of the core school) with powers to administer the unit in order to achieve certain identified goals.

The core school and the cluster principal had power and authority over many aspects of school management. Samaranayake (1985) notes that:

"The Cluster Principal will function as head of the school cluster with the core school as his administrative centre. He will be responsible to the District Director of Education for the administration and supervision of education in the schools in the cluster. The Cluster Principal will plan the development of the whole cluster and will identify the strength and functions of the schools vis-à-vis the cluster. The teachers will be deployed by him in the cluster school. He will supervise and organize the curricula programmes, the co-curricula programmes, the sharing of facilities and equipment within the cluster. The District Director of Education will consult the Cluster Principal in the transfer of teachers to and from the cluster. The Cluster Principal will have the authority to recommend increments of teachers and recommend minor punishments. He will also be given the authority as regards use of facilities fees" (pp. 27-28).

Several studies (Staff College, 1986; Cabral, 1989; Kulasena, 1989; Perera, 1989; Gunawardana et al., 1991) revealed that in many cases the leadership of the cluster principals was inadequate. This was partly due to the fact that many were less qualified persons who lacked administrative experience. Hence the Ministry recommended that the cluster principal come from the Sri Lanka Education Administrative Service (SLEAS) or hold at least a Grade 1 post of the Sri Lanka Principals Service (SLPS). But some of these cluster principals did not have these grades, while some, although qualified, had not had appropriate training.

The 1984 report on management reforms in the Ministry of Education

In 1984, recommendations were made in order to give substantive delegation of power directly to the school level. The report on management reforms in the Ministry of Education (1984) very strongly viewed principals as front-line managers of the Ministry and recommended that adequate authority be delegated to them. It recommended that "...Principals should be given the delegated authority necessary to punish any teacher, supervisor, or other school employee, up to a reprimand or a fine of up to one week's pay, also the authority to suspend any student for misconduct or misbehaviour for up to one month. He should be given the financial authority necessary to repair any equipment or furniture in the school and also take action on the Annual School Board of Survey accordingly. This delegation should be spelt out in detail and also in relation both to the substantive position of the Principal and also the grade category of the school. ...Each school should have a development fund to mobilize external resources. Large schools should have a school budget with three component parts: (1) Government funds, (2) facilities fees, (3) community contributions" (Ministry of Education, 1984, p.9).

> "On the one level the Ministry had not followed up its policy by amending the necessary circulars, regulations, etc., while on the other, principals had not risen to the occasion to exercise the power and authority that should be their due".

However, as Perera (1989) pointed out, the 1984 management reforms had not been systematically implemented and responsibilities were not transferred to the principal as envisaged. "On the one level the Ministry had not followed up its policy by amending the necessary circulars, regulations, etc., while on the other, principals had not risen to the occasion to exercise the power and authority that should be their due" (p. 9). Similarly, at the school level, principals had not adequately delegated and assigned functions and responsibilities to their deputies or sectional heads.

The provincial councils

The Provincial Council Act 1987 devolved many political and administrative functions by introducing a totally new administrative structure in the country. The provinces received more autonomy to manage their affairs. Provincial ministries were established and posts of Education Minister and Education Secretary were created. The provision of facilities to schools, the appointments of principals to types 2 and 3 schools[1], the implementation of non-formal education programmes, the construction and maintenance of buildings, libraries, playgrounds, as well as the procurement and distribution of educational aids and furniture, fell under the responsibility of the province.

[1] In Sri Lanka, state schools are categorized into school types which are defined as follows:

With the establishment of the provincial ministries, the responsibilities of the provincial education office and the provincial director were reduced. The provincial director was made accountable to the provincial secretary while the schools and the divisional office were controlled by both the provincial Ministry and the provincial Education Department. The roles of the provincial secretary and the provincial director could have been better defined. In any case this was a reform which witnessed transfer of responsibility and authority to a lower level.

The school development boards

With the establishment of school development boards (SDB) in 1993, the decentralization effort became more consultative and participatory. School development boards consisted of 12 members, namely, the principal (Chairman); the deputy principal; three teachers; three parents; three former students; and a person elected by the Board members to represent the well-wishers. It was expected that these SDB would meet once every two months.

With the establishment of school development boards in 1993, the decentralization effort became more consultative and participatory.

Type 1AB	Schools with classes up to Grade 13 which include GCE (AL) science, arts and commerce streams;
Type 1C	Schools with classes up to Grade 13 which include GCE (AL) arts and commerce streams;
Type 2	Schools with classes up to Grade 11;
Type 3 (i)	Elementary schools with classes up to Grade 8;
Type 3 (ii)	Primary schools with classes up to Grade 5;
National schools	A special group of promoted, 1AB schools. They are administered and financed by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE).

The Members of Parliament and of provincial councils, local authorities and contractors registered in the MEHE or in the provincial education ministries as possible contractors for buildings or supply of equipment, were disqualified from these Boards. Even their parents, spouses, brothers and sisters were disqualified.

It was expected that the Board would meet at least once in two months with a quorum of seven. The duties of the Board were to assist the principal in areas such as: assessing the current needs and performance of the school; promoting sports as well as recreational and cultural activities; developing and maintaining school infrastructures and facilities, utilizing effectively state allocations and community contributions, etc.

The school boards were abolished in February 1995. Several studies reveal that they did not exist in most primary schools and wherever they existed, the major emphasis was on generating resources.

The school boards were abolished in February 1995. Little assessment had been done to measure their impact before their abolition. However, several studies (Perera and Palihakkara, 1997) reveal that they did not exist in most primary schools and, where they did exist, the major emphasis was on generating resources. People took the boards to be fund-raising bodies. Though the Act had suggested democratic election procedures, the nomination of members was done by the principals. In certain schools, most members hardly attended meetings. The teachers were not involved in the decision-making process.

A summing up of the main problems encountered

A close scrutiny of these efforts indicates that, although the country had taken several noteworthy steps towards the decentralization of educational administration with a view to upgrading operational efficiency, the effects were marginal. The process of decentralization was mainly concerned with establishing layers between the central ministry and the school in order to bring management closer to the school. Though the geographical units of administration have shifted from the central to the middle levels, the pattern in which schools function almost remained unchanged. By 1994 there were four layers between the central ministry and the school, namely, the provincial ministry, the provincial department, the zonal office and the divisional office. In some places there was the district educational office as well. This often created problems for the school, as it had to serve many masters. Several studies (e.g. Staff College, 1986; Manoharan, 1988; Cabral, 1989; Kulasena, 1989; Perera, 1989; Silva et al., 1993; Perera and Palihakkara, 1997) identified several main issues:

1. There were instances where the schools were subjected to multiple control by the different layers. Different offices had issued different instructions on the same subject. Principals were called for meetings by two or three layers (e.g. district and division) on the same day.

2. These offices were responsible for helping schools to function better. But in fact they themselves did not have a work ethic. Some of the offices could not initiate or facilitate any development. The number of layers had multiplied but some did not have good officers to man them. The word 'misfits' has been used to refer to some.

3. The co-ordination between the different levels was minimal. The closest office to the school, the division, was not given much authority. Schools generally preferred to be controlled by the higher layer, thus ignoring the one closest to them.

4. The layers had been established in order to put an end to lengthy procedures. But there was evidence that administrative procedures had become longer. Divisional offices prepared the pay sheets, but for approval, they had to be submitted to the district office. Divisional offices kept teachers' files. The director of the district office gave the approval for extensions of service. For this, he had to refer to the teachers' file and this caused unnecessary delays. Cabral in his study on the 1984 management reforms in the Kegalle district (1989, p. 7) quoted an officer as saying: "Management reforms have really reduced efficiency. Everywhere it is mere duplication."

5. The multiplication of work within the different layers often increased the work of the principals. Manoharan identified many functions which were duplicated at the district and divisional offices. One example quoted (1988, p. 4) is as follows: "One of the functions of the divisional education office is the assessment of divisional cadre requirements, obtaining and maintaining the cadre and inter-divisional transfers. The divisional education office used to call for necessary statistics from the cluster principal to assess the teacher cadres of the division. ... The district offices too call for the same particulars separately and assess teacher cadres of schools. This double exercise is a waste of time, material and energy."

This reveals that a more comprehensive and carefully prepared package needs to be introduced if schools are to work with more autonomy. Most functions carried out by the above layers could be delegated to the school level. Although the above offices are headed by SLEAS personnel, teacher matters are mostly carried out by the clerical staff. It has become common practice for many of the clerical staff to cause delays due to lethargy. Some of them even disrespect the principals and teachers through their indifference. Several studies (Perera and Palihakkara, 1997; Wijesundera et al., 1997a; Wijesundera et al., 1997b) reveal that teachers have negative impressions about the way they are treated at the educational offices, the speed with which their matters are attended to and the lack of professional support from the officers.

2. Introducing School-Based Management: proposal and rationale

The reform proposals

The MEHE (1996) in a draft proposal of the reform named 'National Education Policy: A framework for Action on General Education' states that the "process of decentralization must go right down to the level of the school". It stresses the need to give greater responsibility to the school and the community.

The 'Reforms in General Education' (1997) stresses the need to adopt School-Based Management to make schools function more effectively.

The 'Reforms in General Education' (1997) stresses the need to adopt School-Based Management to make schools function more effectively.

"School-Based Management has been accepted as an effective tool in the management of schools... It should specifically state the power, authority and responsibilities of the principal and the Senior Management group of the school. There shall be a Council of Management for each school comprising the Principal, representatives of the staff, parents, past pupils and well-wishers and a departmental nominee to assist the Principal in the formulation of policy and preparation of development plans and monitoring the implementation thereof" (NEC, 1997, p.25).

The same document also suggests that giving a grant to schools based on unit costs should ensure equitable allocation of resources. In order to alleviate disparities in the allocation of resources, a grant would be calculated at a student rate. The transfers of teachers would be effected only at the beginning of the year and the consent of the principal of the school would have to be obtained before the transfer letters were issued.

The rationale for introducing School-Based Management (SBM)

The budget speech of November 1998 noted that in 1999 the school reorganization would be done in two ways: firstly, by establishment of an effective management system taking school as the base and, secondly, by the introduction of a Performance Appraisal System for teachers.

The emergence of SBM in Sri Lanka has to be viewed within the overall package of reforms introduced into the education system, but also within the broader context of socio-economic and political changes taking place in the country and, finally, within the context of the international SBM movement. Sri Lanka is one of the first countries in the Asian region that has decided to implement SBM and also one of the first developing countries to brave it.

The need for School-Based Management in Sri Lanka springs from several factors:

Firstly, the individual school is submerged in an all-island set of general macro programmes, which are not sufficiently adapted to the specific needs and characteristics of each school. The principal and the staff do not seem to make a conscious effort to diagnose their needs and initiate essential organizational changes. In spite of the decentralization measures, most schools still blindly follow the script sent from the centre. The principal remains a representative of the zonal or divisional office. There is a need to take the school design and develop its short- and long-term plans in order to achieve its objectives.

> The individual school is submerged in an all-island set of general macro programmes, which are not sufficiently adapted to the specific needs and characteristics of each school.

Secondly, schools have not identified the reservoir of both human and physical potential energy, hence these resources are left unutilized. They do not endeavour to solve at their own initiative their problems regarding infrastructure development or resource generation; these are passed on to the hierarchy. Schools in Sri Lanka function from 8.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. and with the exception of some, the buildings are not used outside these hours. There are a number of schools which have underutilized land which could be used for educational purposes, resource generation or for the welfare of students. Schools need to have more autonomy with regard to determining the generation, allocation and utilization of resources.

Thirdly, the country has a predominant rural sector, although relatively small, varied climatic conditions and geographical variations enrich it, thus providing various employment opportunities. In addition to the plantation settlements there is a vast fishing sector. Lack of curricula diversification at junior and senior secondary levels has created a widening mismatch between education and the world of work. Only a handful of schools in the urban and in the semi-urban sector try to link up with the expanding private sector in order to provide their pupils with wider curricular initiatives. There is need to ensure more academic freedom and initiatives which offer more interesting and relevant curricula.

Fourthly, there is enough research evidence to show that school improvement is related to the community factor. The in-school staff often come from outside the local community, thus the support and encouragement of the parents and community leaders motivate them. In fact, most initiatives ought to come from the community. SBM guarantees the involvement of the community in school planning and resource management.

Fifthly, during the past two decades both short- and long-term teacher-training courses have mushroomed in the country. But this has had only a marginal impact on school development. The programmes focus more on individual teacher development than on school development. Under SBM, each school will have a budget for staff development and congruence between staff training and school needs will be more conceivable.

Under School-Based Management, each school will have a budget for staff development and congruence between staff training and school needs will be more conceivable.

3. The implementation process

Initially SBM will be introduced in a selected group of schools. The lessons learned at the implementation stage should be applied when SBM is introduced to the next cohort of schools. The selection of the first group of schools has not been without debate. One proposal is to introduce SBM to national schools as they have more resources than others. Hence, they can manage their affairs with less material and professional support from the state. Furthermore, as they are managed by MEHE, the decision to give them more autonomy can be taken by the latter, without referring to the provincial authorities. The second proposal is to introduce SBM to about an equal number of 1AB schools representing the different provinces as well as national schools. The third proposal is to introduce SBM to 500 schools representing all categories (1AB, 1C type 2, type 3), locations (urban/rural), gender and media. It is argued that the less advantaged schools will have more freedom to run their affairs as they face less political or other interference.

The different steps taken so far to introduce SBM will be briefly presented and discussed hereafter.

Training

First of all, several *workshops* have been organized which allowed education officers to clarify the concept of SBM and to examine its implications for the existing education management system. At an initial workshop held in the National Institute of Education (July 1997) on SBM, the participants discussed the weaknesses in the present Sri Lankan education system. They also identified possible characteristics of a School-Based Management system in Sri Lanka as follows:

- a level of autonomy which allows the school to determine its own approach to the teaching/learning process;
- the internal allocation of the school resources and the capacity to plan for the future in partnership with local communities;
- a system demonstrating the school's accountability to its clients and government constituencies;
- a close relationship between the school and the community through representative membership on the school board, with whom the principal undertakes school development plans that reflect local educational priorities;
- a school culture that empowers staff through open participation in the management of the school where delegation is a normal management feature;
- a recognition by external authorities that the school is able to organize an effective network/system to deliver the curriculum according to the local needs within the national curriculum framework;
- the existence of a school-based staff performance appraisal system linked to a school-based staff development programme.

The participants endorsed the introduction of school-based management as a practical solution to many of the shortcomings in the existing education system. They emphasized the need to grant autonomy to schools in areas such as development planning, increased expenditure approval and minor staffing matters.

Subsequently, several sessions were held during which principals were briefly made aware of the underlying assumptions and implications of SBM and asked to share their views. These sessions have paved the way for a forum of stakeholders to share their enthusiasm, express their fears, while assimilating the concept of SBM. It is part of an important strategy in order not to be taken by surprise later.

The National Institute of Education (NIE), together with a group of principals, deputy principals and officials from the Ministry and from the provinces also prepared a *handbook for principals* so that they could assimilate the concept of SBM, its implications and effects within the school. Further, a *training manual* was developed by NIE covering the themes of planning school development, curriculum delivery and assessment, managing resources and setting and achieving standards. The initial training of four days will be delivered by a two-by-two-day programme with about a four-week interval between the first and second training programmes. The principals will have to adapt the concepts of training and the training materials to their schools and work with their own staff.

The implementation of SBM will be monitored by the responsible authorities and trainers in order to identify the best practices in the management of schools for replication. If SBM is introduced to a school in January, formative reports will be prepared in April and August and a summative report in December. The schools would continue to assess their growth while external monitoring would complement it. If SBM is to succeed, it would become not only an ongoing activity, but part of the schools' culture.

NIE, in collaboration with MEHE, has *trained four trainers* in each province who will conduct principals' training programmes as required. The trainers attended a four-day training programme and once the date of implementation of SBM and the first cohort of schools are made known, the trainers will receive one day's orientation as well as training materials.

Revision of circulars

The revision of some of the existing circulars is seen as central to the implementation of School-Based Management.

The revision of some of the existing circulars is seen as central to the implementation of SBM. These circulars have been identified by a group that represents various stakeholders. After two days of deliberation, this group suggested that the following be revised:

- circulars pertaining to the utilization of school buildings and land;
- circulars pertaining to repairs of school buildings;
- circulars pertaining to the repairing of equipment without delay;
- circulars pertaining to the revision of fees and petty cash.

The first draft of the revised versions of these circulars is now available.

Establishment of School Management Council and Senior Management Team

The establishment of the School Management Council (SMC) and the Senior Management Team (SMT) (SMT has also been referred to as SMG – School Management Group) needed further guidance. The SMC is related to development planning and educational imperatives, the SMT is about translating the development plan into operational management activities to ensure school improvement. Both mechanisms, while complementary, The School Management Council (SMC) is related to development planning and educational imperatives, and the Senior Management Team (SMT) is about translating the development plan into operational management activities to ensure school improvement.

need a clear line of demarcation which separates their roles and functions. The views of principals and education officers have been obtained concerning the composition and functions of SMCs and SMTs.

Consequently, SMC is composed of the principal (chairperson), deputy principal, two teachers, two parents, two ex-students, two well-wishers and one representative of the Education Authority. Some other suggestions included having one or two student representatives. Some schools prefer professionals to well-wishers. The Committee is expected to: (i) develop a school policy and plan; (ii) provide and develop physical resources; (iii) maintain and develop school plant; (iv) co-ordinate school-community relationships with SMT; (v) co-ordinate student welfare activities with SMT; and (vi) ensure security.

The SMT is composed of the principal (chairperson), the deputy principals and the sectional heads. Some have mentioned that the school senior prefect or the two senior prefects (in case of mixed schools) should be in the SMT. Schools which have assistant principals, have suggested that they also be included. However, in the case of small schools, with few teachers and generally without deputy principals or sectional heads, the whole staff could constitute the SMT. The SMT's role is to: (i) make and implement educational decisions; (ii) oversee the teaching/learning process; (iii) carry out student evaluation; (iv) co-ordinate co-curricular activities; (v) ensure student discipline, welfare and counselling; and (vi) carry out school supervision.

Formula funding

Under SBM, schools are given greater financial flexibility and autonomy. The government has worked out a new financing mechanism for schools on a rational as well as an equitable basis: norm-based unit cost resource allocation mechanism (NBUCRAM). Two variables are used here, the number of grades in a school and the number of students. Two norm sets are used, one for recurrent expenditure and the other for capital expenditure. Using the two variables and the norm sets, schools are given their allocations. A 10 per cent additional grant is given to the deprived schools. Resource allocation needs to be subjected to intensive monitoring and evaluation, by which quality assurance and probity are ensured.

Performance appraisal of teachers

It is expected that performance of every teacher will be appraised annually at school level. Every teacher will be assessed in five specific areas, namely responsibilities in the teaching/learning process, student welfare and student guidance, co-curricular activities, school-community relations and special services rendered to the school. At the beginning of the year, the teachers will list the tasks they hope to achieve in each specific area, after discussions with the principal or a senior teacher (e.g. deputy principal, section head, grade co-ordinator, etc.) to be designated by the principal. The principal or this senior teacher will serve as the supervisor. The teachers will then write out what support or resources they would expect to receive from the school in order to achieve those targets on time. At the end of the year

The performance of every teacher will be appraised annually at school level. The principal or a senior teacher will serve as the supervisor.

the teachers will record the extent to which the targets have been achieved. The supervisors will then write their observations, in the fourth column, in which they will mention the progress made or degree to which the targets have been achieved and the reasons why the targets were not achieved as expected. The supervisee and the supervisor will also discuss the progress made at the end of each school term. At the end of the year the principal will make recommendations for the annual increment of the teacher.

Restructuring of schools

At the same time, plans are under way to reorganize schools on a two-tier basis, namely junior schools from Grades 1 to 9 and senior schools from Grades 10 to 13, in place of the present system where there are several categories of schools (see footnote 1). The preliminary exercise towards this end is undertaken and completed by the Policy Planning and Monitoring Division (PPMD) of the MEHE, together with the respective provincial education authorities.

4. Two important conditions for success

The main objective of SBM is to improve the performance of schools. It is based on the underlying assumption that autonomous schools seek to release the energy of their staff by empowering them to take professional responsibility for raising educational standards. Several doubts have been expressed over the successful implementation of SBM unless certain conditions are met.

Recruitment, selection and permanency of principals

One of the main issues raised is the suitability of principals for their post; they may be either unfit for the new role or may misuse their power. SBM accords great responsibility to the principals and their selection is therefore crucial. The recruitment procedures of principals have to be adapted. A national-level examination was introduced in the late 1980s for this purpose. The question is: is that the best way to recruit principals? A competency-based examination can be useful, but needs to be complemented with other selection criteria. SBM presupposes that schools differ and if so, the right choice has to be made as people also differ and do better in some institutions than in others. Before implementing SBM in a school, the authorities have to find an appropriate method to see that a suitable person is occupying the job. Under the SBM system, the selection of principals has to be taken seriously.

School-Based Management accords great responsibility to the principals and their selection is therefore crucial. The recruitment procedures of principals have to be adapted.

The permanency of the principal also needs to be guaranteed. An assertive principal can become a victim of circumstances in the current education system. If a long-term development of schools is to be assured, a principal has to serve in a school for at least five to eight years.

The preparation of principals

Both the MEHE (1996) and the NEC (1997) reports have stated the need to train principals to discharge their functions successfully under the new dispensation. Training principals and their senior staff for the new roles envisaged under SBM and developing a team management approach to work are important.

As mentioned earlier, an initial training programme has been designed to stimulate awareness about SBM among education officers. Continuity of educational management training, particularly for principals, will be critical under devolved management. SBM means that there is a clear move from 'classroom teaching level' to 'school organization level'. Fortunately, future training will be able to draw from the experiences accumulated during previous training programmes. Sri Lanka has already moved away from the traditional approach in management training to a site-based and group-based approach through the 'Institutional Development Capacity of Disadvantaged Schools Project, 1993-98' and the 'Secondary School Development Project, 1996-98'. Both projects were based on the assumption that the internal capacity of the schools for self-renewal can only be achieved with the conscious effort of the members of the schools. Their approach is no doubt an extremely valuable source of inspiration for educational management training in the country.

5. Some views from below

One major occurrence in school-based management is the autonomy given to the school or, in other words, to the principal and the Senior Management Group. A questionnaire was administered to 144 principals and 243 deputy principals of national schools to find out what functions and tasks should be delegated to the school. In addition, 165 principals and 108 deputy principals of other-category schools were also brought together in four separate focus groups and were requested to write down the functions and tasks that should be delegated to the school level when SBM is in operation. A group of 126 teachers of different types of schools met in two separate groups, and the concept of SBM was briefly explained to them. Then they were asked to write down the tasks and functions that should be delegated to the school level. A group of 32 trainers involved in principals' training, both at national and provincial levels, and a group of 24 zonal directors were also interviewed to find out the functions and responsibilities that should be delegated to the principals when SBM is in operation.

The responses of the different groups were clustered into three areas: personnel, curriculum, and budget, the assumption being that SBM will be put into practice by giving the school the authority over these three key decision areas. The detailed results with the replies of the different categories of respondents are given in the Appendix. Since the principals/deputy principals and the teachers were a large sample, the number of responses received under each response is also given.

The main conclusions coming out of this exercise are briefly summarized hereafter.

For principals and deputy principals, the most important preoccupation is to be involved in the selection and management of teachers.

For principals and deputy principals, irrespective of school category, the most important preoccupation is to be involved in the selection and management of teachers. A large number of principals and deputies specifically mentioned that they wish to be involved in the selection process in some form. Even zonal directors and the management trainers considered this necessary. Many also mentioned that they need to be consulted when teachers are posted or removed. There was a recurring demand that principals could request the removal of ineffective teachers, a point frequently mentioned by the principals of type 2 and type 3 schools of the Uva province, where most such schools are disadvantaged. The principals of type 1C, type 2 and type 3 schools wanted to be given more powers to deal with latecomers and to decide on teacher incentives. School principals in remote areas mentioned that teachers should not be removed without replacement. A request made by all categories of school principals, but especially so by those of rural schools, was for the principals to have the authority to obtain the services of appropriate persons when specific subject teachers were not available. Several principals from national schools requested for the maintenance of school files and the selection and deployment of minor employees, though the principals and deputies of the other school categories had not so requested. There were more requests from national schools for increased autonomy in school admissions than from other schools. School-based staff development and the strengthening of in-school supervision were mentioned across all categories of schools.

Principals and deputies of all the categories of schools also showed a keen interest in having a stronger say in curricular variations. Type 2 and type 3 school principals specifically mentioned that they need to be allowed to take vocational initiatives. Principals and deputies of several schools of all categories wanted freedom to purchase educational equipment. This was the issue most frequently mentioned by teachers from whatever type of school. The need to have funds, and flexible procedures to use them for student welfare, was mentioned by several rural school principals, though this was not mentioned by those of national schools. Freedom to organize educational trips with parental consent, more flexibility in organizing co-curricular activities, the authority to decide on the school calendar and to organize school examinations were issues mentioned by staff from across all school categories. It is evident that all categories needed more freedom in financial management. The autonomy in developing the school plant and the infrastructure, and the autonomy in the management of physical resources were mentioned across school categories. Several type 1C, type 2 and type 3 school principals requested that they need to have more freedom in the generation of resources.

It may be interesting to note that the issues which the different groups suggested be delegated to the school, were already suggested in the 1979 Report 'Relevance in Education' by an eminent group of educationists. It is frustrating to realize that at least some of those functions and responsibilities had not yet been handed over. Even in 1984, though some progressive proposals were made, they remained at the level of suggestion.

6. In conclusion: lessons to be learned from the international scene

Sri Lanka can draw from success and failure stories on SBM highlighted in literature worldwide. Bezzina (1997, pp. 197-198) provides a useful realization that School-Site Management (SSM) is 'not about money, but about ownership'; SSM should not see school as a 'target of change' but as a 'centre of critical inquiry'. Calvert (1989, p. 40) is of the view that under SBM, reliance on fund-raising, donations and free use of community and parent volunteers may give rise to several problems. Fund-raising in wealthy communities is more successful than in poor communities, therefore equity problems will emerge. Sackney and Dibski (1994,

p. 110) go on to say that "Perhaps the greatest single worry of educators and parents in a decentralized school system is the problem of equity".

However, it must be stated that in Sri Lanka the existing system too has perpetuated imbalances and the gap keeps widening. Cheng (1993, p. 17) sees that in a "complicated, changing and challenging context, school-based management is a promising model", but warns (1996, p. 182) that "the traditional conception of school-based management is simplistic and narrow and usually ignores the multiplicity of self-management in school".

According to Gamage (1996, p. 213), the realization of set goals of SBM, is a "time consuming, laborious process which needs proactive, professional leadership and careful planning". Evans and Hood (1997, p. 14) are of the view that "SBM has presented principals and senior management teams with enormous challenges", but "its advent has also offered many opportunities and the ones who have seized these opportunities have been able to raise the standards in their schools".

SBM envisages increasing autonomy and making school self-managing. But autonomy itself offers constraints. Fidler, Russell and Simkins (1997, p.245) provide a useful reference. "Self-management offers many opportunities to schools. What it cannot do, however, is free them and those who manage and work in them, from the constraints associated with working in an economic and political climate which presents major challenges for public-sector organizations of all kinds".

A number of issues and concerns that emerge through self-management of schools have been highlighted by Caldwell and

Spinks (1988, pp.19-21). One main concern is to have a framework for accountability. "The school must be managed within a framework of national state and local guidelines. These guidelines may be in the form of legislation, policies, priorities, and conditions in collective agreements and funding arrangements. The school must be able to demonstrate that these guidelines have been honoured. Three patterns of accountability are suggested in the self-management of schools: accountability to a central authority, accountability to the local community, and accountability to the governing body or appropriate policy group within the school".

> The failure of some School-Based Management policies in the western context occurred where the emphasis had been more on structural reform rather than on an 'organic' change.

Murphy and Beck (1995) have intensively explored the reasons for the failure of some SBM policies in the western context and conclude that this occurred where the emphasis had been more on structural reform rather than on an 'organic' change. The latter would provide and create a better 'educational community' for students. They suggest that "SBM needs to undergo a transformation from a structural form to an organic one" (pp. 174-179). This provides a valuable challenge to Sri Lankan policy-makers, administrators within and outside the school and, more specifically, to capacity builders (trainers) who will have an uphill task ahead of them.

Leithwood and Menzies (1998), reviewing 77 empirical and case studies, identified a number of obstacles that could be encountered in the implementation of SBM in the early and middle stages. They categorized their findings for different stakeholders, i.e. teachers, principals, district administrators, parents and the wider community.

A country that aspires to introduce SBM could well learn from these findings and examine the possibility of using the strategies suggested by Leithwood and Menzies (1998, pp. 265-275), according to whom, the obstacles for SBM implementation could be summarized as follows:

- lack of shared vision (principals, teachers, administrators, parents, community);
- lack of experience (principals and teachers);
- insufficient training (principals);
- excessive paperwork (principals);
- adherence to traditional roles (principals, teachers, administrators);
- lack of a sense of belonging or ownership (teachers);
- unwillingness to change their habits (principals and teachers);
- incompetence (teachers);
- lack of teacher solidarity (teachers);
- lack of leadership (principals);
- doubt the advantages of SBM (principals, teachers, administrators);
- doubt parental commitment (principals and teachers);
- increased stress (principals, teachers, administrators, parents, community);
- uncertainty about the legal status of SBM (principals);
- financial constraints (principals and teachers);
- lack of resources to effect changes (principals and teachers);
- lack of authority to make changes (principals);
- excessive time demands/workloads (principals, teachers, parents, community);
- lack of interest in broader issues (parents, community);
- hesitant to speak out at meetings (parents, community);

- domination of principals and teachers on councils (parents and community);
- low percentage of interested and involved parents (parents and community);
- low expectation on children's education (parents);
- lack of trust and respect for teachers (parents and community);
- early loss of enthusiasm (principals and teachers);
- perceive that principals, parents and community do not respect them (teachers);
- perceive council meetings as time wastage (principals and teachers);
- power struggle among individuals, groups (principals, teachers, parents, community);
- lack of role definition (principals, teachers, administrators, parents, community).

For the successful implementation and sustenance of SBM, significant changes in both role and orientation at every level of the existing education system need to be introduced. The preparation of the key players, i.e. principals and middle managers in schools, is vital to ensure the successful introduction of SBM. They have to convince the other staff members and parents. The mass media has to be used effectively to disseminate information on new ideas and concepts, in order to lessen the resistance that could be encountered and also obtain support since the stakeholders will be aware of the advantages of SBM.

SBM calls for a greater and active participation of the community in the planning, administration and financing of the schools. It needs to enable students and parents to choose the type and quality of education they receive. Under SBM, schools will be flexible enough to take into account expectations of students and parents. The community and in-school staff will be involved in curricular and budgeting decisions. SBM as a reform has to accompany other reforms as well. SBM is not an end in itself, but a means to reach greater human aspirations and achievements, which will only be possible with a change in our values and attitudes.

Appendix
Results of survey on school autonomy

1. What principals and deputy principals of national schools want to be delegated to the school level

The number of principals and deputy principals of the national schools who responded are given in *Table 1* and the tasks and functions they wanted to be delegated to the school (or for which schools need to be given more autonomy) are listed afterwards.

Table 1. Principals and deputy principals of national schools

Province	Number of schools principals	Number of schools responded	Number of principals responded	Number of deputy principals responded
Western	53	16	16	31
Central	31	14	14	27
Southern	51	28	28	53
North East	30	19	18	31
North Western	22	17	17	31
North Central	10	10	10	19
Uva	35	26	26	27
Sabaragamuwa	22	17	15	24
Sri Lanka	254	147	144	243

Tasks and functions	***Number of responses***
Personnel	
• Selection of teachers	81
• Personnel management	79
• Supervision to be an in-school function	74
• Teacher performance appraisal to be carried out by the principal and increments to be strictly based on the same	72
• School-based staff development	60
• Student admissions	38
• Teacher transfers	32
• Selection and deployment of minor employees	30
• Student discipline	21
• Maintenance of teacher files	25
• Decide on teacher incentives	22
• Request the removal of ineffective teachers	21
• Obtain services of others who are suitable when a particular subject teacher is not available	16
• Teacher recruitment	12
• Teacher discipline	19
• Improve community support	18
• Better parental participation in school improvement	16
• Maintain EMIS	11
• Increase parental involvement on pupil decisions	08
• Improve student involvement in management	03
• Establish and maintain linkages with agencies, institutes	03
Curriculum	
• Curricular variations	63
• Implement annual plans	23

Implement appropriate co-curricular activities	20
Buy educational equipment	20
Implement specific projects on school improvement	18
Conduct examinations	16
Decide on school educational trips	12
Implement programmes in student personality development	07
Decide on annual school calendar	06
Conduct counselling programmes	05

Financial

Financial management	74
Physical resource management	50
Physical plant development	42
Budget control to school	33
Freedom on payments of school electricity, water and telephone bills	10

They also mentioned that the following need to be guaranteed:

1. The parental body should not interfere too much with school functioning.
2. Political interference on school management should be prevented.
3. Team management within the school has to be improved.
4. The middle managers or promoted staff should be given formal appointments.
5. The School Management Council and School Management Groups and their members should be given job descriptions.
6. The principal and deputies should be given skills in management, especially decision-making skills.
7. Office interference needs to be reduced.
8. The need to provide a legal base/legal provision on school autonomy.

2. What principals and deputy principals of other schools (1AB, 1C, type 2 and type 3) want to be delegated to the school level

Table 2. Principals and deputy principals of other schools (non-national schools)

Province	Number of principals	Number of deputy principals	Type 1AB	Type 1C	Type 2	Type 3	Urban	Semi-Urban	Rural
Western	22	20	03	07	07	05	08	08	06
Central	18	11	04	09	06	05	08	06	10
Southern	21	17	03	11	07	06	09	08	10
North East	32	08	11	08	06	06	09	12	10
North Western	16	15	04	07	04	06	04	09	08
North Central	16	13	03	08	07	05	09	06	08
Uva	32	13	03	07	17	09	08	11	17
Sabaragamuwa	18	11	02	06	05	07	04	07	09
Sri Lanka	165	108	33	63	59	49	59	67	78

The details of principals and/or deputy principals of 203 other schools (non-national) who responded are given in *Table 2* and the tasks and functions they wanted to be delegated to the school (or for which schools need to be given more autonomy) are as follows:

Tasks and functions	***Number of responses***
Personnel	
• Selection of teachers	61
• Request the removal of ineffective teachers	47
• Obtain services of others who are suitable when a particular subject teacher is not available	31
• School-based staff development	18
• Teacher transfers	18
• Decide on teacher incentives	18
• Student admissions	12
• Student discipline	12
• Supervision to be an in-school function	11
• Personnel management	09
• Teacher recruitment	08
• Make decisions on teachers who come late	07
• Improve community support	07
• Improve on parental support	06
• Teachers should not be removed without replacement	05
• Establish and maintain linkages with agencies, institutes	03
Curriculum	
• Curricular variations	37
• Decide on school timetable	27
• School to take appropriate vocational initiatives	24
• Student welfare	21
• Implement annual plans	16
• Decide on school starting and closing times	15
• Decide on school educational trips	12
• Implement appropriate co-curricular activities	09
• Buy educational equipment	09

• Conduct examinations	06
• Decide on annual school calendar	06
• Let schools offer curriculum choices of pupils	03
• Arrange extra classes and make reasonable charges	02
• Link with private sector to offer relevant curriculum	01

Financial

• Generation of resources	16
• Financial management	15
• Physical resource management	14

Tasks and functions

• Physical plant development	13
• Budget control to school	10
• Freedom to pay school electricity, telephone, water bills	02

They also mentioned that the following need to be guaranteed:

1. Teacher training needs to be made more diversified and effective.
2. The circulars need to be amended.
3. A consultative body needs to be appointed to the school.
4. Authority must be given in writing.
5. Principals and the other promoted staff must be given training on supervision.
6. Outside interventions must be minimized.
7. Stop the school being taken for granted where it has to serve many masters.
8. Change the teacher leave scheme.
9. The principal must be appointed by the School Board.

3. What teachers wanted to be delegated to the school level

One hundred and thirty-two teachers were briefed in two focus groups about the recommendation of the new reforms on SBM and were asked to write down the tasks and functions that should be delegated to the school. One hundred and twenty-six answers were received. The details of the sample are given in *Table 3* and their responses follow.

Table 3. Teacher sample

Province	School Total	Teacher Total	Type 1AB	Type 1C	Type 2	Type 3	TS 1	TS 2-1	TS 2-2	TS 3-1	TS 3-2
Western	29	77	06	10	26	35	02	08	26	36	05
Central	06	06	02	02	01	01	00	01	02	03	00
Southern	11	11	02	04	03	02	02	01	03	03	02
North East	05	05	01	02	01	01	00	02	01	02	00
North Western	05	05	01	01	02	01	00	01	02	02	00
North Central	04	04	01	01	01	01	00	01	01	02	00
Uva	06	06	01	02	02	01	00	01	01	04	00
Sabaragamuwa	11	12	03	04	03	02	00	03	02	06	01
Sri Lanka	77	126	17	26	39	44	04	18	38	58	08

Note: TS = Sri Lanka Teacher Service

Tasks and functions	***Number of responses***
Personnel	
• Personnel management	27
• Student welfare	21
• Teacher recruitment	12
• Maintain teacher files	11
• Student admissions	11
• Selection of teachers	10
• Teacher performance appraisal to be carried out by the principal and increments to be based on the same	10
• Strengthen in-school supervision	08
• School-based staff development	06
• Student discipline	06
• Improve parental support	06
• Improve student involvement in management	01
Curriculum	
• Curricular variations	52
• Buy educational equipment	33
• School to conduct student evaluation	11
• Decide school educational trips	11
• Decide on annual calendar	05
• Implement appropriate co-curricular activities	05
Financial	
• Financial management	19
• Physical plant development	05
• Infrastructure development	05
• Resource management	04

The teachers of rural type 2 and 3 schools mentioned that those schools must receive a special grant for student welfare. Some others have mentioned a grant should be given to buy cupboards, blackboards etc. Some mentioned that politicians must not be allowed to use the school for their own interests.

4. What zonal directors want to be delegated to the school level

The 24 zonal directors that were interviewed expressed the desire to delegate the following to the school level:

Personnel

- The principals' consent/approval should be obtained/consulted when teachers are sent to the school or when teachers are removed from the school
- If the principal requests a transfer of a teacher due to the teacher's negligence, it should be considered
- In-school supervision needs to be strengthened
- All teacher increments must be based on the recommendation of the principal
- Principals must be given more power to maintain school discipline

Curriculum

- Principals have to approve their school timetables
- Principals should have the freedom to organize educational trips with the consent of the parents
- Principals must have more freedom to implement specific school development projects/co-curricular programmes
- The school must have more freedom to adapt the curriculum to suit the local needs

Financial

- The purchase of educational items needs to be entrusted to the school

- The principal and the SMT should be entrusted with the control of SDS funds and facility fee funds
- The school should be allowed to collect money/material from the community and NGOs
- Schools should be allowed to improve their infrastructure and to be given grants through the SMC for new buildings

5. What trainers want to be delegated to the school level

The 32 national and provincial trainers wanted the following to be delegated to the school level and most of them emphasized the need to give school staff specific training:

Personnel

- In the selection of teachers and the non-teaching staff: the principal must be consulted when teachers are transferred out and the principal's request to remove a teacher must be respected
- More authority to make personnel decisions
- Teacher performance appraisal by the principal must be considered in teacher promotions without undue external pressure
- Freedom to communicate and develop linkages with institutes and agencies that help school improvement
- To plan and conduct school-based staff development programmes
- To have flexible procedures in obtaining teacher services such as the freedom to get teachers to conduct extra classes and remunerate them or to hire someone outside the cadre to meet specific needs

Curriculum

- Develop and implement long-term school development plans
- Implement special projects for school improvement
- Freedom to design and implement appropriate co-curricular programmes

- Freedom in making curricula decisions: to make amendments according to the needs of the area

Financial

- Financial freedom to carry out school development plans effectively
- Fund-raising for school activities and school projects
- Preparation of school budget
- Freedom in financial management in matters such as meeting electricity, telephone and water bills
- Improvement and development of school plant
- Financial freedom in the maintenance of school plant
- To express views in the design of buildings and furniture and to be consulted when buildings are put up and when furniture or equipment are purchased.

School autonomy and efficiency: some critical issues and lessons

*R. Govinda**

Introduction

The school administration system has been a major focus of reform processes recently all over the world. A constant theme in all these efforts has been to move towards greater decentralization of planning and management of education. The stated rationale for the move varies from one country to another. However, there is a pervasive feeling that school education systems have grown not only in size, but also in complexity, placing national governments under severe stress. To overcome this problem, it is widely accepted that central governments should shed some of their powers, transferring them to people operating nearer to the schools. It is believed that such a move would give more operational freedom to local authorities and institutions and improve the efficiency of educational management.

The concept of 'school autonomy', which has become a popular term lately in many countries, is to be seen in this larger theme of decentralization of educational management. It should be noted that any move towards decentralization has strong

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socio-political undertones and the contours of the emerging management framework of educational administration have been determined by these political considerations (Brown, 1990). It could be argued that school administration is only keeping pace with the organizational developments in the larger system of public life and business marked by liberalization and reduction of state control.

'School autonomy' might be seen to imply that the school would become a fully self-administering unit, completely freed from external authority and influence. But in reality this is never so. The school continues to be seen only as one level, the last layer in a hierarchically organized arrangement for management of the school education system. The state continues to be the prime financier of the school system in most countries and the proposal has never been that the state disappear from the scene altogether. The question of autonomy is more related to deciding the 'locus of control' with respect to specific roles and functions. Thus, there is no scope for an absolutely autonomous school. In theory as well as in practice, the term 'school autonomy' is to be understood within the context of the prevailing political administrative framework in each country. This paper sets out to review the global scenario with respect to policy and practice of 'school autonomy', and highlight the issues involved in applying these policies and practices to the school systems in Asia.

1. Understanding the concept of school autonomy

A review of literature on school autonomy (see Leithwood and Menzies, 1998) reveals that the concept and its operational manifestation have come to be referred to in a variety of ways, such as school site-based management. school-based management, and school self-management (Levacic, 1992). It may also be noted that the concept of 'school autonomy' is not new. It has been there in educational literature for at least the last three decades, especially in countries such as Australia, Canada, Netherlands, New Zealand and a few school districts in USA (Caldwell, 1990). It has only recently, however, become the centrepiece of the movement for reform of school management, especially in developing countries.

School autonomy has been promoted in different countries with different connotations and with varying rationale.

The operational contours of the concept have taken a number of shapes in different countries. In all these cases, however, school autonomy is not a single-point agenda. Rather, it is presented as part of a larger framework of reform of the school administration system. Establishing a method of school accountability and improving the efficiency of school functioning, apart from general concern for reducing the role of the bureaucracy, are common features of the reform framework. School autonomy, therefore, has been promoted in different countries with different connotations and with varying rationale. Very often the debate about school restructuring has centred around three themes of empowerment, accountability and academic learning - at times more commonly referred to as autonomy, accountability and efficiency (Elmore, 1990).

School autonomy as part of the decentralization process

Even though the concept of school autonomy is not new, in the past few years the concept has re-emerged essentially as part of the process of decentralization. In most countries, therefore, school continues to be seen as at the bottom end of a management

School autonomy is seen as an attempt to decentralize and debureaucratize school control so that schools can be saved from the problems associated with centralized control.

hierarchy which is bureaucratic. School autonomy is seen as an attempt to decentralize and debureaucratize school control so that schools can be saved from the problems associated with centralized control. In a school-based management system, the principal, staff, students and parents are empowered to make curricular, personnel and budgetary decisions (Sackney and Dibski, 1994). It is a form of decentralization that identifies the individual school as the primary unit and relies on the redistribution of decision-making authority as the primary means through which improvements might be stimulated and sustained (Gamage, 1996). In some cases, the relationship between the school and the government is direct, with very little intermediary bureaucracy. In the United Kingdom, political and administrative reform led to a substantial loss of traditional power by intermediary bodies like LEA. The reform proposals in Portugal foresee the contrary (Lima and Afonso, 1995). However, in the Asian context, which is steeped in large educational bureaucracies, the trend is still to concede limited autonomy within a hierarchical set-up. The formation of clusters of schools and transferring some power and authority to the cluster level, is another approach adopted in decentralizing the system and giving more authority for local-level decision-making (Benford, 1988). In some countries, school clusters are born of the professional needs of individual headteachers and emerge through grass-roots initiatives (Bell, 1988). In others, they are mainly imposed by the central level. In either case, they are advocated particularly for dealing with the question of school-based management with respect to relatively small schools.

School autonomy as a value or only as a means to an end

School autonomy is being promoted in different countries with somewhat varying rationale. Some argue that school-based management or school autonomy has to be pursued due to its inherent value in empowering the school authorities and the community to self-manage. However, most policy-reform moves seem to indicate that structural reorganization of the system, incorporating school autonomy as one of the components, is being pursued essentially to achieve greater efficiency and productivity. It is thought that local autonomy could enhance managerial efficiency and financial accountability and render the system perfectly competitive (Johnes, 1996). For example in the United Kingdom, local management was introduced to increase school autonomy and introduce competition as a new dynamic into the system (Busher and Hodkinson, 1996).

Local autonomy could enhance managerial efficiency and financial accountability and render the system perfectly competitive.

School autonomy and reduction of state control

Some have argued for school autonomy more from a political-administrative perspective, highlighting the need for reducing state control and influence in school functioning. It is an attempt to decentralize and debureaucratize school control. It is argued that community members are the final stakeholders in school education and authority for school management should finally nest with them. The community control and governance model shifts power from professional educators and departments to parents and community groups not previously involved in school governance. Community control seems likely to result in the most profound changes in schools (Leithwood and Menzies, 1998). While, apparently, this strategy carries broad appeal among all concerned, in practice it seems to have led to greater private control in education and has raised questions of equity. The debate is particularly relevant in several countries in Asia which are still struggling to universalize even primary education.

Freedom for parents to choose the school has been another of the major forces behind the reform process in many countries adopting school based management. However, this is not a major issue in many countries of Asia, since in most countries of the region, legislation on where one should study has not been very strong.

Forms of autonomy: who decides?

Reviews of the practice of school autonomy adopted in developed countries show that school autonomy or local-based management systems are characterized by one or more of the following: (a) Decentralized decision-making and delegated budgeting at school level. The school has significant authority to make decisions regarding its operation and is given a budget to cover most of its needs, which it can spend largely as it thinks fit. (b) The school's budget is allocated according to a set of norms and is based on a school improvement plan and not by administrative discretion. (c) Parents can exercise choice of school and the school's budget has a close link with the number of pupils it enrols. (d) The school is managed by a council or governing body with direct community representation. In most cases, issues related to financing and school budgets occupy a central role in the discussions.

A critical question which serves to define autonomy within this organizational form is: 'who decides about what aspect of school functioning?' School autonomy, or school-based management, means in some cases full authority for the school head. However, an emerging pattern in many countries seems to be that a governing council, with representatives from among parents, has the major decision-making authority. Furthermore, three areas which have remained contentious in this regard are freedom with respect to: (a) curriculum, (b) examinations, and (c) allocation of finances. In these three areas, the balance between the state and the school remains unsettled, although for the present it seems to be leaning in favour of the state.

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2. Critical issues in implementing school autonomy

A general consensus is emerging across almost all countries of the world regarding moving from systemic reforms to making the individual school the unit of change and development. The underlying concern for this move also seems to be universal, namely, improving school quality and functioning. In spite of this commonality of purpose, changes are being implemented in varying contexts and conditions. This, in effect, has led to a number of questions and issues, both conceptual and operational. A review of the experiences of initiating school autonomy in different countries highlights some of the following issues.

School autonomy and community participation

School autonomy is very often identified with community involvement, participation and control in school matters. The attempt to bring the school and the community together is not a new phenomenon in any country. Education of the children has always been recognized as a joint responsibility of the home and of the school. This recognition is the basis for the creation and promotion of parent-teacher associations in primary schools. However, now there is a significant change in the way this joint responsibility is currently being interpreted. Consequently, there is a distinct shift from informal Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) to the creation of formal School Management Committees (SMCs), as is the case in many countries of Asia. These SMCs have specific roles and are assigned specific responsibilities in the management of the local school. The school autonomy reforms have further deepened this move towards community involvement by vesting legal and statutory powers in these bodies as Governing Councils or Boards. It is fully recognized that this legal framework of school governance by stakeholders at the local level has increased the feeling of ownership and control by the community, and also brought about greater concern for accountability at the school level.

This legal framework of school governance by stakeholders at the local level has increased the feeling of ownership and control by the community, and also brought about greater concern for accountability at the school level.

Based on a review of 83 empirical studies, Leithwood and Menzies (1998) note that (i) administrative control seems likely to produce the least change in schools; (ii) professional control appears to have more positive effects on the practices of teachers; and (iii) community control seems likely to result in the most change in schools. Implementation of school-based management (SBM) in Australia required a transformation of the organizational culture of schools. Participatory decision-making demands better communication, resulting in the ownership of the schools' mission, goals and policies and a total commitment to the process of implementation (Gamage, 1996).

While appreciating the advantages of school autonomy, two significant questions are being raised, particularly in the context of several Asian countries. The first anxiety is that, within a context of low educational development in many countries of the region, such extreme localization of authority may make the school the locus of an unwarranted power struggle, undermining the basic concern of improving school efficiency. This is well illustrated by the studies of school management committees in several countries of South Asia. The second fear is that the handing over of school control and management to local councils and boards may, in the long run, lead to deprofessionalization of school administration and even weaken the authority of the school heads. As has been pointed out by scholars investigating the effects of school autonomy reforms in some industrialized countries, this may gradually erode the power and authority of the school itself and lead to further central control on vital matters of schooling such as curriculum, learner evaluation, personnel management and so on.

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Changing role of headteachers

In the traditional framework of a centralized or hierarchical management system, the school appears as the last level of management and the headteacher as the leader for making things happen in the school. What happens to this leadership role of the headteacher under the framework of school autonomy? This seems to be a very complex question. To some extent one can consider that the role of the school head has increased as the locus of control in matters of school management gets transferred from the bureaucracy to the local SMC or the school governing board. However, in reality, anxieties are expressed on this count. Some observers feel that transfer of school management authority to legally formed local bodies takes away the professional freedom and authority of the school head in shaping school development programmes. It is felt that the headteacher's subordination to the wishes of the local community is likely to lead to short-term gains, but not sustainable positive changes as it takes away the initiative for development action from the headteacher. It requires more in-depth study of actual experiences in order to judge whether this concern is justified or not. However, it is clear that school autonomy is bringing in a significant transformation in the roles and responsibilities of the school head.

Wohlstetter and Odden (1992), based on their review of literature, suggest that SBM as a governance strategy ought to be implemented along with curriculum and institutional reforms to improve school productivity. All these demands increased the authority and responsibility of the headteachers to undertake and implement reforms at the institutional level. The social expectations of the headteacher are also changing correspondingly. Will this transformation bring greater efficiency and effectiveness into school functioning? This again demands further examination of the implementation processes accompanying school autonomy in varying contexts.

Critical role of 'school improvement plans'

Traditionally, school functioning has been assessed and monitored against externally prescribed norms applicable to all units in the education system. The framework of school autonomy attempts to change this in a significant manner. The focus shifts from external monitoring to internal monitoring and management processes. Further, it emphasizes the need for convergence of expectations from internal or local stakeholders and external authorities. It is within this context that the preparation of 'school improvement plans' has emerged as a powerful tool in achieving this convergence of expectations.

While school improvement plans are becoming an accepted instrument across countries for giving concrete direction to improving school efficiency, this has raised some important questions. Will this undermine the importance of educational processes and bring about a competitive culture oriented simply to measurable outcomes in school management? What happens to schools which cannot withstand this pressure of competition? Do we allow them to wither away? These are questions for which one cannot find a common answer. School improvement planning cannot be seen only as a budgetary tool for obtaining grants, it has to become the basis of positive pedagogical changes leading to improvement in school quality.

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Changing framework for supervision in the context of school autonomy

What happens to the role of the external supervisor with respect to a self-managing school? Should the external supervisory system which has been an integral part of the education system be altogether disbanded or highly marginalized? Some countries seem to have taken this step as a logical extension. But this does not mean that external inspection of the system has been abandoned. Rather, school autonomy and insistence on preparation of individual school development plans has changed the whole basis of external assessment of school performance. The school improvement plan is expected to play a dual role in this framework. Schools have to become accountable to show results according to the commitments made in the school improvement plans. On the other hand, the school improvement plan becomes the negotiated instrument for assessment of school performance; this is no longer left to the wisdom of the local supervisory personnel. Will such a move work in countries where school education is not fully accessible to all children and the schools do not have even minimum levels of facilities, both human and physical resources? Under such circumstances, will the undermining of the traditional framework of supervision prove beneficial? Or should school improvement planning be promoted along with a meaningful transformation of the existing school inspection and supervision mechanism?

School autonomy and professional capacity building

In the traditional management framework, the education authorities as well as the schoolteachers and even the community members are used to viewing school only as a recipient body, implementing the decisions made for the larger system. Changing schools into self-managing bodies demands a total change in this perspective. But how would this change be brought in? This becomes a major challenge as school autonomy requires a new set of skills and attitudes among all the stakeholders. Are the traditional programmes of in-service education of headteachers and schoolteachers geared to meet this challenge? These are important questions that need to be tackled while moving towards school autonomy. In fact, school autonomy brings a new group of clientele to the forefront in this process of capacity building for self-management of schools, namely, the community members. It is often felt that community members in many cases are totally unprepared to take on the task of self-management of the school. Thrusting this responsibility on them without corresponding facilities for skill building may further jeopardize the interests of the school, instead of improving its efficiency and quality. It is not easy to resolve the issue. While one cannot undermine the need for building necessary understanding and skills among school authorities and community members, it is difficult to justify any move against empowerment of local stakeholders for self-management of the school on the grounds of lack of capacity.

School autonomy and improved efficiency of school functioning

As already pointed out, one of the major considerations for the school autonomy reforms across different countries is the assumption that this would improve school efficiency. Does it really happen? Research evidence in this regard is not clear and unequivocal. First of all, it is difficult to come out with a commonly applicable definition of school efficiency. School efficiency parameters have to take into account the contexts and conditions within which schools are functioning. The same parameters cannot be used to evaluate schools which are functioning without even basic infrastructure and those schools which have good facilities. Therefore, developing school performance indicators which are sensitive to the contexts in which the schools are functioning becomes a necessity.

A second issue related to the question of school efficiency and school autonomy is 'who decides the norms of assessment of school efficiency?' Setting external norms appears to go against the basic thrust of school autonomy. However, can this be left to individual schools altogether? This cannot easily be resolved. While it is essential to view the performance of each school in an individual manner, it is difficult to negotiate different sets of parameters of functioning for schools working under a common public education system. A related issue that is coming in for serious debate is that of using learner achievement as the main indicator of school efficiency and quality. A common trend observable recently is to introduce systems of large-scale external assessment of learners. The results of such tests are becoming the tangible basis - often the sole basis - for determining school quality. Is this justified? Many fear that this is likely to de-emphasize the value of educational processes and make outcomes of testing, the main arbiter of financial support and value judgement.

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Autonomy and innovation

It is natural to assume that greater autonomy to the school will provide greater freedom for innovation and experimentation. Is this really happening? There are no large-scale research studies done to examine this issue empirically. But the literature on the topic indicates that more autonomy may not hold any such guarantee. This depends critically on what the individual school values as well as the expectations placed by the local community. Many express the concern that leaving the schools individually isolated to meet public expectations may make them more conservative and less adventurous in experimenting with new ideas. Limited public expectation and increased exposure to external testing mechanisms may make the schools defensive in protecting the existing standards, instead of risking new methods and promoting new visions for school development. These are, of course, conjectures that need more empirical investigation on determining not merely whether school autonomy promotes innovation, but of devising strategies for using school autonomy as a means of exploration and experimentation.

Many express the concern that leaving the schools isolated to meet public expectations may make them more conservative and less adventurous in experimenting with new ideas.

School autonomy and the question of equity

The issue that is most debated in the context of school autonomy or school-based management is 'whether school autonomy meets the concerns of equity?' The question is of less relevance in the industrialized world; it is limited to the question of freedom of the parents to choose the school and also, to some extent, the freedom of the school authorities in admission procedures and norms. However, the question raises more fundamental issues in developing countries where disparities in parental income are vast and facilities for schooling are very uneven. This again is a challenge for the education experts to devise methods of decentralizing power to local stakeholders without compromising the concerns of equity.

School self-management has to be built on an assumption that each school can be treated as an independent organizational unit with the internal capacity to propel itself further. What happens to small schools within this context of school autonomy? This question has brought to the forefront a new concept of local management which considers clusters of schools as the unit of self-management. Many countries are moving towards the creation of such school clusters, linked horizontally or vertically to other schools within a compact geographical area and vesting the cluster with power and authority to carry out development programmes for the member schools. Some countries have experimented with this and moved further with the process of decentralization. In others it is still being explored. Nevertheless, in the context of small schools, the creation of a management framework at the cluster level appears to be an effective alternative for promoting local- level management involving the school authorities and the community members.

3. Some lessons to note

All countries are currently moving towards a more decentralized system of educational management. Within this broader framework, reforms leading to school-based management or school autonomy are taking concrete shape in many countries. Even though critical analysis of empirical experiences in implementing school autonomy is not abundant, the literature does point out some lessons in this regard.

- *It is difficult to determine the optimal locus of decision-making in education.* It is almost impossible to view individual schools as totally independent organizational units; they will continue to be part of a larger public education system. In fact, intermediate levels of decision-making may have to be retained between the state and the school but with new role definitions. This is particularly relevant to the hierarchically structured education systems operating in many Asian countries.

- *School autonomy demands a changed mind-set among all concerned.* This is not easy to achieve in places where people have been nurtured to act only on the dictates of higher authorities. Merely changing the rules and regulations by transferring power and authority to the school management bodies will not suffice. Developing new habits of self-determination is a slow and arduous process which has to be tackled with adequate provisions for capacity building and orientation.

- It is necessary to *link the issue of school autonomy with community control within the local political and developmental context.* While the school governing council or village education committee can become the apex body for decision-making with respect to general management issues, questions of academic and professional management have to be independently dealt with. There cannot be a uniform prescription which decides how far the community members can be brought into academic decision-making. This depends very much on the profile of the members constituting such management bodies and the mutual confidence that the teachers and the members of the committee enjoy.

- *School autonomy demands a radical transformation of the organizational culture of the public education management system.* Greater involvement of the local community demands that the higher authorities agree to give up certain powers hitherto enjoyed. Also, school control by local stakeholders brings greater pressure on the school authorities to promote transparency and shared perspective with parents. The school authorities cannot merely meet the demands of remotely placed higher authorities and get away even with low efficiency in school functioning. Accountability to local masters is not something many school authorities are familiar with.

- *Public accountability at the system level cannot be forgotten by giving greater autonomy to the school.* Depending on the specific systemic parameters, each country will have to work out indicators of assessing school performance. This has to be done in such a way that while the state and national decision-makers receive meaningful feedback on the functioning of the school system, it does not tend to destroy the variety and uniqueness of the individual school.

- It is inevitable *that efforts towards quality improvement in education focus more on building the strengths of individual schools rather than finding uniform cross-country solutions.* In this context, 'school improvement planning' has emerged as an effective tool for setting a vision for the development of each school. The framework of 'school improvement planning' cannot be common to schools across different countries, or even within a country. For instance, locally specific approaches have to be formed with regard to small schools and their improvement plans. School improvement plans should not merely become tools of negotiation for grants, or the basis of supervision and assessment, adequate importance also has to be given to the reflective processes at the school and the local level in preparing the plans.

- *School-based management requires a new framework of personnel selection and management.* The current practice of appointing teachers to the system and not to an individual school which is prevalent in many countries needs reconsideration. Also, it is necessary to evolve a new framework for teacher career prospects within a policy of school-based management. In fact, studies show that in some of the countries adopting school autonomy measures, teachers are complaining about the lack of career opportunities.

- Often school autonomy is projected as a means of reducing government control. *It is difficult in many countries to expect that government control will significantly diminish.* In such contexts, school autonomy measures have to be designed innovatively to accommodate freedom of action at the school and community levels within the framework of a state-controlled system. There are different models operating in different countries that have adopted school autonomy. It may well be that unique combinations have to be worked out in each country keeping various political, administrative and financial considerations in view.

Supervision and support services in five Asian countries: a comparative analysis

*A. De Grauwe**

School supervision services are in a somewhat paradoxical situation. On the one hand, they are popular, in the sense that they have existed for a long time in almost all countries and that much hope is put on their interventions to improve the quality of schools and teachers. On the other hand, they suffer from neglect, both among policy-makers, whose spending on school and teacher supervision and support has decreased significantly, and among researchers, who have spent little effort in recent years to examine the state of this service.

This forms the background to the decision of the IIEP to undertake an international project on *Improving school supervision and support services for basic education*. However, there were two more specific reasons why the Institute chose to work on this area. In the first place, there is a growing consciousness that improving the quality of education is not simply a question of injecting more resources (didactic materials, teachers, teacher training) into the system, but that the management of these resources at school level is fundamental. In this regard the relationship between in-school actors and their immediate 'supervisors' (school inspectors, pedagogical advisers, etc.) is a

> **One important determinant of the deterioration of the functioning of primary schools precisely relates to the weakening of the professional supervision and support structures for teachers.**

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decisive factor. One important determinant of the deterioration of the functioning of primary schools precisely relates to the weakening of the professional supervision and support structures for teachers.

This attention to school and teacher supervision and support finds a second justification in the present trend towards increased school autonomy. Teachers themselves, once in the classroom, have always had a significant level of autonomy. But recently, in many countries around the world, schools are receiving more freedom in making decisions in fields as crucial as the curriculum, staff management or the budget. The ability of schools to use this increased freedom effectively will depend to a large extent on the strength of the support services on which they can rely.

The IIEP's project started with a number of research activities, implemented in collaboration with ANTRIEP member institutions, in the Asian region. In five countries (Bangladesh, the State of Uttar Pradesh in India, Korea, Nepal and Sri Lanka), one institution prepared a national diagnosis on school supervision, while the IIEP afterwards wrote a comparative analysis.[1] That comparison shows that the supervision service in several of these countries is characterized by ineffectiveness (in the sense that it does not achieve its objectives) which is not unrelated to the deplorable working conditions. These are partly an expression of the neglect from which supervision suffers among policy-makers. But the

[1] The comparative analysis and the five national diagnoses have been published: G. Carron; A. De Grauwe and R. Govinda, *Supervision and support services in Asia. Vol. I: A comparative analysis, Vol. II: National diagnoses.* Paris, UNESCO/IIEP, 1998.

The ANTRIEP institutions involved were NAEM (Bangladesh), SIEMAT, with assistance from NIEPA (India - the State of Uttar Pradesh), KEDI (Korea), CERID (Nepal) and NIE (Sri Lanka).

analysis also highlights more positive conclusions. The need to strengthen supervision as a quality assurance tool is increasingly recognized. As a result, efforts are under way to turn supervision into a more support-oriented service, closer to the teacher and the school. The remainder of this paper examines in more detail the main problems and a number of innovative strategies which different countries are trying out.

Firstly, however, it is worth noting that the research teams were faced everywhere with a lack of indicators on supervision and support services. Most countries evidently have some information on supervisors who are public servants and thus appear in some databases, but very little, if any, of that information is analyzed or used to monitor the state of the service. For example, the available data allowed the teams to calculate, for instance, the average number of teachers and schools per supervisor and to show in some cases the existing disparities. However, the job became more difficult when it came to describing the profile of the staff, by looking at their gender, age, experience and length of service. In most cases, such data were not available for a country as a whole and the research teams used small samples to arrive at some useful indications. More qualitative information was obtained through case studies examining the actual operation of supervision and support services and their impact on schools. In this regard, headteachers and teachers were interviewed, in addition to supervisors.

The challenges

Supervision services are faced with a wide range of challenges and threats to their effectiveness, going from more practical matters related to their working conditions over management issues such as inappropriate recruitment procedures and poor training opportunities, to what is arguably the most crucial challenge: their lack of impact on schools. The following paragraphs examine in more detail each of these problems.

The lack of earmarked funds for supervision is quoted as a serious constraint: it indeed limits severely supervisors' room for manoeuvre and stops them from acting on their own recommendations to schools.

It is hardly a surprise that in countries where national income is low, such as India, Bangladesh or Nepal, supervisors' *working conditions* are mediocre. Three aspects in particular need stressing: the lack of offices, transport and a specific supervision budget. Firstly, the staff generally do not have their own offices but work in the office of their superiors. This does not only render the work more difficult, but means especially that the officers, based in principle close to the school, e.g. at block level, are in practice working in the district office which is much further away. More time is thus spent on travelling and the more remote schools are seldom visited. This problem is compounded further by a lack of suitable transport facilities. The Assistant Thana Education Officers (ATEO) in Bangladesh and the supervisors in Nepal both receive bicycles, but the schools are so far away and in such inhospitable terrain that many are left unvisited for many years. The situation is somewhat better in Sri Lanka and especially in Korea. Supervisors in all five countries, on the other hand, work without a budget over which they have control. To be more precise, budgets are made available to offices, within which the supervisors work, and not to the individual officers. The lack of earmarked funds for supervision is quoted as a serious constraint on their work: it indeed severely limits their room for manoeuvre and stops them from acting on their own recommendations to schools.

This limited power to take initiatives is one of the factors which contributes to the *low status* of supervisors in these countries. Many teachers and headteachers are unimpressed by the professional competence of the staff supposed to inspect and advise them. This is linked to different issues: in Bangladesh and Nepal, the lack of primary school teaching experience (which is not a condition for recruitment) makes for a loss of their authority in the eyes of teachers; in Sri Lanka and Korea, the fact that supervisors received at certain times lower salaries than headteachers had a harmful impact on their status. However, most important is the issue of training. A distinction needs to be made in this regard between Sri Lanka and Korea, where induction training in particular is well established, and the other three countries, where capacity building, either at the beginning or during a supervisor's career, lacks structure, continuity and a focus on supervision and support matters. In Bangladesh, for instance, all ATEOs have a role to play in sub-cluster training, but only 20 per cent have received some training in this field themselves.

A third problem – one which is not at all unique to these countries – consists of the *overload of supervisors' tasks*. This overload takes on two forms. On the one hand, their efforts are dispersed between too many different tasks, some of which are difficult to combine and could even seem at times to be mutually exclusive. In general, the administrative tasks, which are less crucial but more urgent, are given more time than the real pedagogical issues. In Korea, for instance, school visits take up less than 10 per cent of a supervisor's work, with more than half of their time spent on administrative and office work. The situation is better in the other countries, but nowhere do school visits receive top priority. On the other hand, they have too many schools to supervise. *Table 1* shows that only Korea and Sri Lanka can be said to encounter a school/supervisor ratio which allows for regular and consistent support to schools.

Table 1. Number of schools and teachers, by supervisor

		School Supervisor	*Teacher* Supervisor
Bangladesh	ATEO	18.6	80
Korea	Junior supervisor and supervisors	3.2	63
Nepal	Supervisors	32.9	173
	Supervisors + resource persons	16.3	85
Sri Lanka	SLEAS officers	10.6	193
	Master teachers	44.0	796
Uttar Pradesh	ABSA (all posts)	67.9	188
	ABSA (occupied posts)	83.2	231

Notes: For Bangladesh, Korea and Uttar Pradesh, only primary schools are taken into account; in Nepal and Sri Lanka, both primary and secondary schools are considered. Note also that resource persons in Nepal are functioning in only 40 of the 75 districts and that the information given on 'supervisors and resource persons' refers to those districts only.

A fourth challenge precisely relates to *the work supervisors undertake when they are in schools*. Because of the large number of schools to be visited and because of the distances to travel, little time is left for the school visit itself. In Uttar Pradesh, for instance, two to three primary schools will be visited in one day. In Bangladesh, most visits are similarly short; the main activities during a short visit are to check attendance, to observe the school environment and its cleanliness and to check co-curricular and food-for-work related activities. Classroom observation does not form part of the agenda. In general, it seems that supervisors, when visiting schools, do spend some time on discussions (especially with the headteachers) and on verifying different administrative matters, but that little attention is given to classroom observation, to discussions with the individual teachers and with the community. But not only are school visits rather superficial, teachers regularly complain about the attitude of inspecting staff, which they describe as condescending. Supervisors themselves recognize that their relationship with teachers and heads of schools is not based on mutual trust and respect. They feel that their work is more disciplinary than developmental, because of the above-mentioned factors over which they have little control.

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A fifth – and crucial – challenge lies in ensuring that a useful *follow-up* is given to school visits and supervision reports. Ideally, this forms part of a cycle, leading to school improvement. The recommendations of visits and reports should be used by schools, by supervisors and by other staff in charge of pedagogical development (e.g. teacher-training centres, curriculum developers, examination boards) in order to improve their work. This however is seldom, if ever, the case. The reasons are multiple. Firstly, the content of reports and especially the nature of the recommendations do not facilitate follow-up. An analysis of reports revealed that they seldom address the more profound pedagogical issues. In Uttar Pradesh, for instance, the report contains mainly facts and figures on enrolment and attendance, but nothing on the quality of subject-teaching, on academic support provided to teachers or on material aids used. In Sri Lanka, the lack of specific instructions

In many cases reports are quickly shelved without being analyzed, to a large extent because there is no specific unit or service in charge of ensuring that follow-up action be undertaken.

for improvement renders the reports difficult to use by the school and by the other addressees. A second reason lies in the fact that in many cases reports are quickly shelved without being analyzed, to a large extent because there is no specific unit or service in charge of ensuring (or monitoring) that follow-up action be undertaken. The third reason consists in the fact that relationships between the above-mentioned services in charge of pedagogical improvement are neither institutionalized nor clearly structured. In other words, the supervision and support staff, who through their work collect much useful information on the experience and needs of teachers, are seldom used by other agencies in order to enrich and improve on their actions.

A final challenge – a result of all the previous ones – is easily summarized: the *impact* of supervision and support on schools is limited and not necessarily positive. The attitude of school staff is somewhat ambiguous: on the one hand, they are convinced that school and teacher supervision can play a motivational and positive role; on the other hand, they are dissatisfied with the present arrangements and the actual service. In general, teachers are more critical than school principals. The latter feel that supervisors can be of assistance in ensuring motivation and especially discipline among the teaching staff and the students. However, the closer one comes to the classroom, the less impact is felt. Teachers deplore not only the irregularity of visits, but also the haphazard planning and the lack of preparation. Somewhat of an exception is found in the Master Teachers in Sri Lanka, who not only come to schools more regularly, but also concentrate more on pedagogical teacher support. Where an inspection visit is focused towards control, as is the case, for instance, in Bangladesh and Nepal, visits lead to more stress among teachers rather than helping them with their professional development.

Policy changes

The dissatisfaction with the present state and impact of school supervision and support has led all countries to attempt to introduce reforms in the functions and the structure of this service. Three in particular will be commented upon here. They all have as a main objective to increase the effectiveness of supervisors by clarifying and simplifying their role and by bridging the distance that separates them from the school.

Firstly, there is a *clearer distinction between the task of offering support and that of exercising control*. Two different strategies can be discerned. In Sri Lanka and Nepal, separate categories of staff have been created, respectively Master Teachers and Resource Persons, to offer advice, while the remaining supervisors occupy themselves more specifically with the traditional inspection tasks. In the other countries, supervision staff are asked to become more development-oriented and less control-focused. There have been changes in the nomenclature, with a move away from 'inspector' towards the more neutral 'supervisor' or 'education officer'. This was accompanied by a reformulation in the job description. In both Korea and Nepal, the transformation of supervisors into agents of change was promoted as an objective within the context of increasing democracy in society. It is worth noting that such

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reorientations of job descriptions have not automatically led to changes in the way supervisors actually undertake their tasks. This is not surprising, as attitudes do not so much depend on policy declarations, but on a number of objective constraints that – as we saw – have undergone little improvement in recent years.

A second policy reform consists of strategies to *decrease the distance between supervisors and schools*. Here again, two – not mutually exclusive – trends can be examined. In several countries, an additional layer has been added to the education administration, closer to the schools and from where supervisors operate. In Sri Lanka zones have been divided into divisions; in Bangladesh, the districts (thanas) are divided into sub-thana, each with their ATEO, the supervisory officer. This reform has not occurred smoothly everywhere as it evidently demands an increase in staff and, to some extent, a reorientation of the tasks of the different levels in the administration. In Nepal, for instance, the 1974 'Mid-term review of the National Education System Plan' recommended that districts be divided into various inspectorate units, a recommendation repeated by the 1991 National Education Commission and included in the 'eighth development plan', but its actual implementation is still unsure. The second trend is one in which different schools come together in a cluster in order to offer each other better advice and support and to manage a number of resources in common. Such clusters exist in Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Uttar Pradesh, but their existence does not guarantee that they fulfil the different expectations put upon them. In many cases, such clusters have been set up, not by the schools themselves, but by the administration around resource centres. One problem, noted for instance in Nepal, is that such resource centres are used mainly by the school where they are located, and much less by those further away. In addition, when attempts are made to integrate this cluster layer into the existing administration, it seems prone to adopting some of the weaknesses of that administration, such as an emphasis on control and a concern with petty administrative matters.

A third reform is somewhat more radical, as its purpose is to give *more responsibilities to supervision actors based at the level of the school,* either the senior staff within schools or community representatives. The country which, until now, went the furthest in this direction is Korea, where School-Based Autonomous Supervision (SBAS) was recently introduced to "allow schools to develop and run supervision policies that are appropriate for their circumstances and demands". Principals now have the following supervisory duties: "planning and organizing overall supervision work, encouraging staff to foster supervision work, using qualified resource persons from outside, and establishing overall management plans that reflect national supervision policy". In many schools, peer supervision is becoming equally prominent, with grade senior teachers in elementary schools and subject senior teachers in middle schools being central to this process. In Sri Lanka and Nepal, school principals have also received more supervision-related tasks. The regulations introduced in Nepal in 1992 demand that headteachers evaluate the performance of teachers and make recommendations for promotion and transfer. They can also penalize teachers if the performance of their students is considered below the minimum. The field visits undertaken as part of this research showed, however, that these regulations have remained on paper and that in many schools headteachers do not yet play this role. The situation is somewhat similar in Sri Lanka. In principle, the overall responsibility for internal supervision is entrusted to the school head who, in larger schools, can delegate some functions to teams and individuals. A teacher is thus supervised both by an external actor and by the school head. There is also an intention to rely more and more on collegial supervision where all teachers in, for instance, the primary section, are supervised by their colleagues under the leadership of the principal. It seems however that such innovative approaches are still rather limited and concern mainly the larger urban schools. In Bangladesh and Uttar Pradesh, according to the official policy regulations, teacher supervision remains the task of the external inspector, who might expect from principals that they exercise some advice and control tasks.

As far as supervision by the community is concerned, the picture is mixed. It is true that many schools have school management councils or village education committees, but their role in supervision and support is very limited. At the same time, it is correct to say that policy reforms put more emphasis on the role of these committees. In Korea, for example, the 'Presidential Commission for Educational Reform' has recently recommended that all schools establish School Management Councils, with a representation of parents and community representatives. The main task of these councils is to resolve management problems without the intervention of higher administrative levels. In Uttar Pradesh, members of the Zila Parishad/Municipal Board have the power to visit any basic school located in the area concerned and submit their report. However, there is no information about the extent to which such visits actually take place. In Bangladesh, to quote the national research team, "some of the School Management Councils

In Korea, the 'Presidential Commission for Educational Reform' has recently recommended that all schools establish 'School Management Councils' whose main task is to resolve management problems without the intervention of higher administrative levels.

(SMC) are very active looking after all the aspects of a school and supervising different activities including the teachers' classroom performance, while some are very inactive. In some other cases, the role of SMCs is detrimental to the interest of the school".

SMCs also exist in Nepal, where a more ambitious approach was tried out by the Seti-ERD project. Community participation in school supervision and in instructional improvement was promoted, for instance, through the inclusion of community members in the Resource Centre Management Committees. The results were not entirely positive. Community support was high where it consisted of donating land, providing free labour and materials and mobilizing people for the provision of drinking water. However, where more substantial pedagogic inputs were aimed at, problems cropped up: local people were inadequately represented in the Resource Centre Management Committees and a majority of education officers considered these committees to be incapable of planning school activities or efficiently using the resource centres. A conflict of opinion also arose: school staff want supervision to be of help and assistance to them, but the lay people and the SMC members want schools to be run with strict discipline and expect supervisors to bring such discipline into the schools. Nevertheless, this does not imply that there was no agreement at all between these different actors. All expected supervisors to observe classroom teaching, to play a catalytic role in improving the school and its social and political environment, and to ensure its efficient administration.

Trends for the future

The policy reforms, described above, have led to a restructuring of the supervision system and, in some cases, to a redistribution of tasks, but it has also become evident that such strategies are not sufficient to change its overall lack of effectiveness. A global reform package is needed, which will include more robust financing of the service. Arguably, a shift in the focus and the accountability of supervisors will be as helpful as better financing. In different countries, such a reform is taking shape and some aspects can be discovered in the five countries examined here.

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A first trend thus visible is a *shift in supervision from the individual teacher to the school*. This shift is nourished by the realization that in order to improve the quality of teaching, it is insufficient to work on the capacities of a single teacher but that the whole school management and teaching environment needs to improve. Professional development, including training, supervision and support, needs to concern the whole school rather than a few single teachers. While most inspectors continue to focus on individual teacher supervision, in at least two countries - Sri Lanka and Korea - attempts are made to link supervision to total school quality improvement. This fits within the expectation that schools prepare school development or school improvement plans and projects, with self-set goals and targets. The role of the supervisor, in such a context, becomes more one of monitoring the common achievement of these objectives than the inspection of individuals.

Secondly, there is a greater consciousness that supervision interventions should be more adapted to the needs of the different schools. This means in the first place that these interventions should concentrate on the schools which face the most problems and are the least effective. It might also imply that schools which are functioning well and face few problems do not need much supervision. In other words, the *supervision service should become more flexible and diversified*. Schools, where principals have little experience and training, should be able to count on more external support than those characterized by competent management, by a strong headteacher and an effective internal control system. To set in place such a service will demand the development of a relevant information base at local level on the quality and the development of individual schools. In a project in Sri Lanka on improving the functioning of primary schools in plantation areas, such an information base has become an effective tool for supervisors and resource persons. Indirectly, the indicators developed through the information base also act as a means of assessing and monitoring the performance of the schools in a context-specific manner. In most countries, such a database does not yet exist, although the data themselves are generally available. Some NGOs, for instance, in Bangladesh, are also moving in that direction by deciding the number of supervisors not on the basis of school-inspector ratio or school-teacher ratio, but on the performance of the students.

Schools where principals have little experience and training, should be able to count on more external support than those characterized by competent management, by a strong headteacher and an effective internal control system.

A third trend, which can be discerned, concerns the way in which supervisors are evaluated or, to use a more fashionable term, their *accountability*. At present, in most cases, a supervisor is considered effective and well performing when he or she has visited a minimum number of schools and written a specified number of reports. This is to a large extent a logical criterion, when the main role of the supervision service is considered to be one of administrative control. However, as the service's focus is shifting towards pedagogical improvement, it seems logical that supervisors would be assessed on their impact on the quality of teaching and learning in schools. The complexity of such an assessment system can easily be imagined and thus undoubtedly explains the fact that most countries continue to rely on more traditional evaluation instruments. However, some changes are taking place. As mentioned before, supervisors could be asked to play a role in assisting schools with the implementation of their school development plans. The accountability of supervisors would thus become one that is shared with schools. More than the above-mentioned changes, this is still a trend and not yet reality. But the direction in which it points is a promising one, since it could help in bridging the psychological gap between supervisors and teachers and it would allow these supervisors to focus at the same time on inspection and support.

School efficiency and student and school evaluation in Victoria

*Bill Griffiths**

Introduction

During the past two decades, researchers have identified the characteristics of effective schools. While orientation and emphasis of these studies varied, there seems to be agreement on the following five (Levine and Lezotte, 1990): (i) the quality of school leadership, with particular emphasis on leadership in the quality of instruction and the setting of academic goals; (ii) a pervasive and broadly understood instructional focus which is often interpreted to mean consistency of teaching approaches across the school; (iii) an orderly and safe climate conducive to teaching and learning; (iv) high expectations of achievement for all students and a pervasive belief that all students can learn; and (v) consistent and regular use of student achievement measures to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching programmes. The British experience, particularly in the work of David Reynolds and his colleagues has added 'parental involvement in the learning achievements of their children' to this list, which was first

> Effective organizations are well led; have committed staff displaying high levels of morale and goal congruence; are focused on the needs of their key clients and stakeholders; and regularly and routinely measure their performance for the purpose of improvement.

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generated in the USA. One conclusion that can be drawn from such lists is that effective schools must be effective organizations for their students to succeed. Effective organizations in any field of endeavour are well led; have committed staff displaying high levels of morale and goal congruence; are focused on the needs of their key clients and stakeholders; and regularly and routinely measure their performance for the purpose of improvement.

The measurement of performance, in the business world as well as in schools, has become more sophisticated in recent years. Many businesses are now adopting the 'balanced scorecard' approach to evaluating their performance. A balanced scorecard will include measures of staff morale and goal congruence, measures of leadership effectiveness and measures of client and stakeholder satisfaction as well as measures of financial performance and the profit 'bottom line'.

If we accept that schools are no different from other organizations, except that their 'profit' is measured in student learning rather than in money, it would seem logical that successful frameworks for evaluating school performance would encompass the whole school rather than concentrating only on the educational 'bottom line'.

At the broadest level of generalization, school performance review programmes around the world fit into one of two categories: evaluation can rely on measuring levels of learning among students as indicated by test results, or it can be conducted through 'whole school' evaluation techniques using external inspections. Some international examples can more clearly highlight the difference:

- On the one hand are 'high stake' strategies based on state or district testing programmes. These programmes, such as those used in Kentucky and Philadelphia in the USA, use sanctions (school closure and reconstitution) combined with incentives (cash payments for improved results and support in the form of professional development) and high levels of investment in information technology. While they are often successful in improving standards, especially from a low base, they are generally accompanied by high levels of resentment from parents and, especially, teachers and principals. In the USA, this resentment has occasionally found expression in expensive legal challenges which can distract the reform programme for months at a time.

- On the other hand are external inspection programmes, involving teams of inspectors visiting a school for a week or more at a time and assessing almost all aspects of its operations. These visits usually include an evaluation of teachers' effectiveness through classroom inspections. The programmes operated by the Office for Standards in Education in England (OFSTED) and the Educational Review Office in New Zealand are good examples. They are very thorough, but expensive to operate (OFSTED spends about US$113 million per annum on school inspections) and they also generate some anger and resentment among teachers.[1]

This paper is an attempt to highlight the evaluation procedure adopted in the State of Victoria in Australia.

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[1] The head of one of the English teacher unions, when asked recently about the state of teacher morale, remarked that the worst blow to teacher morale delivered by the Blair government was the reappointment of Chris Woodhead, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, for a second five-year term!

Quality assurance in Victorian schools

It is important for parents, governments, societies and students that school performance is evaluated thoroughly, that the learning standards achieved by students are clearly articulated and that strategies for improved standards can be determined through examination of the effectiveness of the school as a total organization. In Victoria, an attempt has been made to respond to these imperatives using a three-year framework of school planning, reporting and performance review, responsive to the needs of schools and the community.

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The Victorian school accountability framework *Quality Assurance in Victorian Schools* is designed specifically for Victorian public schooling in the 1990s. In Australia, the states have constitutional responsibility for school education. There are 1,650 Victorian public schools, serving 500,000 students. They have three chief characteristics:

- a high level of school autonomy in operational decisions about resource allocation, human resource management and staff selection;
- a common framework for curriculum and assessment developed by an independent Board of Studies representative of all school sectors, government and non-government, business and the community; and

- school councils made up of parents, community and staff representatives with significant control over school policy within broad government frameworks.

The framework is derived both from school-effectiveness literature and from the 'quality' movement prevalent in modern business practices. It is based on five key principles:

Client focus. Schools focus directly on meeting the needs of their major clients: students and their parents. The accountability framework supports schools in achieving the core purpose of schooling: high and improving standards of learning for each student.

Performance orientation. The accountability framework emphasizes both strategic and continuous improvement in performance through planning, monitoring and reporting of achievement and triennial evaluation of performance. It has a particular focus on the value schools add to the learning outcomes of their students.

Ownership and transparency. The processes of accountability and the outcomes of those processes in terms of targets for improved achievement are known and 'owned' jointly by the school and the Department of Education.

Integration. The main accountability mechanisms are integrated into the normal planning, policy and operational activities of the school and of the Department of Education as a whole.

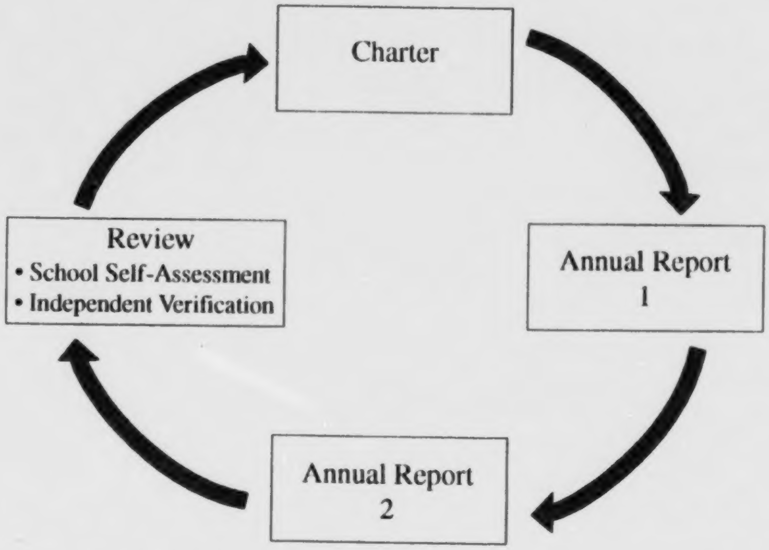
Commonality. The framework applies in a common yet flexible fashion in all government schools. Its implementation is managed by the Office of Review which has an overall quality assurance brief and reports directly to the Secretary of the Department of Education.

The framework in operation

> The framework operates as a structured cycle of internal school planning, monitoring and evaluation with a component of external, objective assessment and accountability.

The key processes in the accountability framework are the school charter, the school annual report and the triennial school review. Each is sponsored at the school by the school council, within guidelines published by the Office of Review. The framework operates as a structured cycle of internal school planning, monitoring and evaluation with a component of external, objective assessment and accountability (see *Figure 1*). The following paragraphs look in more detail at the school charter, the annual reports and the triennial review.[2]

Figure 1. The accountability framework



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[2] All publications relating to the Victorian school accountability framework and published by the Office of Review can be found on its web-site: www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/ofreview.

School charters

The school charter is the school's principal planning framework. It enables schools to integrate their vision and purpose with the identification of long-term goals, strategic improvement priorities and key performance indicators. Most importantly, it encourages schools to be explicit about their values and to use those values to chart directions and identify expected standards of behaviour from staff, students and parents. It enables schools to combine government policy directions with their own planning for improvement.

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Each charter extends for three years and is signed by the school's council president, its principal and by the Department's Director of Schools. It currently includes:

- The school profile describing the school, its context, its educational and social values and beliefs and its particular characteristics and identity.
- The school goals defining the core purpose of the school in four areas: educational programmes and learning outcomes, the general school environment, school financial management, and human resource management. Goals are improvement oriented and each goal is accompanied by a set of achievement measures.
- The school priorities which identify the school's agreed two or three major areas for improvement, each with its own strategic plan and performance indicators.

- Codes of practice which define professional and personal expectations of the various groups making up the school community. The codes of practice include the student code of conduct.

The charter focuses on whole school effectiveness, based on the school's stated values as operationalized in all aspects of school life.

School annual reports

The school annual report is the bridge between the school charter and the triennial school review. Schools use the report to celebrate their progress, outstanding achievements and major events throughout the year. In addition, they report on a common set of performance indicators (see full list in Appendix). The four sets of performance indicators essential to the assessment of the school as a total organization are in the areas of student learning, parent and student opinion, staff opinions and student absence.

- *Student learning achievement*

Schools in Victoria assess the levels of achievement reached by their students in English and mathematics. They do this using the *Curriculum and Standards Framework*, which is issued by the Board of Studies and, as its name implies, outlines the broad content to be covered in the school curriculum and the standards of achievement expected of students at the preparatory year[3] and then the second, fourth, sixth, eighth and tenth year of study.

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[3] Called 'Year Prep' and equivalent to the last year of pre-primary school.

Until the tenth year, teachers assess the degree to which their students have achieved the expected standards using a four-point rating scale. These assessments are aggregated to indicate the achievement of all students at each year level. Teachers' assessments are validated in primary schools by reference to student results in the statewide testing programme, the Learning Assessment Programme at Years 3 and 5 in English, mathematics and science. Similar validation will be available at Years 7 and 9 through the Victorian Student Achievement Monitor from 1999.

School results in the Victorian Certificate of Education at Year 12 are included for secondary colleges. Analysis of student learning achievement also includes those groups of students most at learning risk.

- *Parent and student opinion*

The parent survey is a key measure of client satisfaction with the school's performance.

Schools use a structured survey developed by the Office of Review to monitor parents' opinion of school performance. The survey consists of six scales: the quality of teaching; the academic rigour in the curriculum; the quality of the reporting of student progress; the overall management of the environment; the responsiveness to parents as its clients; and the level of general satisfaction with the school. Schools analyze variations between the scores on the six scales to identify where parents perceive strengths and weaknesses in their performance and monitor changes in the scores from year to year. The survey is used by many schools to identify parental response to changes in aspects such as the school's report format or new policies for managing student behaviour. The parent survey is a key measure of client satisfaction with the school's performance. A student survey measures student perceptions of the quality of teachers and teaching. At the moment, use of this instrument is optional and is more common in secondary colleges than in primary schools.

- *Staff opinion*

Staff perception is also sought, using a structured survey developed by the Department of Psychology at the University of Melbourne. The survey assesses staff opinion on 14 variables related to the organizational health of the school. Schools report on five of these variables: professional growth; staff morale; goal congruence; leadership support; and professional interaction.

Analysis of these variables enables the school to assess the degree to which the shared values identified in the school profile and charter codes of practice are adopted by staff and are perceived by staff to have permeated the school's culture. The survey also enables the school to assess the quality of its leadership through staff perceptions.

- *Student absence*

Schools report the average annual rate of absence of their students. The administrative software used in all schools enables them to identify average weekly and monthly rates of absence, as well as the numbers of students absent for 10 days or more a semester. While it seems an obvious point that students need to be at school in order to take advantage of educational opportunities, it is surprising how few schools had analyzed data on student absence to identify patterns of absence, especially for underachieving students.

Triennial school review

School reviews are conducted at the conclusion of the school's triennial charter period. Reviews use the data and information generated in school annual reports and other performance data to evaluate and report on progress towards goals and priorities established in the school charter. The report uses three-year trend performance data to analyze the effectiveness of the school in its core operational areas with a significant emphasis on student achievement and recommends strategies for performance improvement.

The review process consists of two stages. First, a school self-assessment conducted within guidelines developed by the Office of Review, and secondly, external verification, conducted by independent school reviewers. They will verify that the self-assessment represents a fair statement of the school's achievements over the three years of its charter and contains sufficient challenge to support improved performance in the future.

> **An external verification will verify that the self-assessment represents a fair statement of the school's achievements and contains sufficient challenge to support improved performance in the future.**

These two steps generate a report to the school council and to the Department of Education containing agreed recommendations to be incorporated into the school's next charter so that the three-year cycle of planning, monitoring, reporting and review begins anew. The two-stage process also reinforces the role of the accountability framework in promoting a partnership between the Department of Education and the school. The independent reviewer represents the Department of Education in a discussion with the school about its achievements and its plans for continued improvement based on the self-assessment. Following a public tender, 10 companies currently have three-year contracts to conduct the verification process on behalf of the Department.

In summary then, the Victorian accountability framework has the following characteristics:

- It is an integrated programme of review and improvement, which combines planning through the school charter, with monitoring and reporting through the annual report and with evaluation and review through the triennial review.
- It engages schools in a partnership with the Department of Education in evaluation of performance and in planning for improved performance.
- It integrates performance indicators relating to all the core elements of the operations of a school as an organization into an overall assessment of school performance. In this regard, test results and teachers' judgements of student progress are combined with reliable and valid surveys of parent and staff satisfaction, student absence rates and analysis of the ultimate outcomes of schooling in terms of participation in work or further study to develop a picture of the performance and overall health of the school.
- It combines performance assessment with planning for strategic improvements in performance.

The Victorian accountability framework is, in other words, both integrated and comprehensive. It uses innovative techniques such as staff and parent surveys, as well as more common performance indicators such as test results and, in its focus on the whole school, it recognizes a key finding of international research into school effectiveness: that effective schools take comprehensive and integrated approaches to improvements in performance. The process however is complex and, during its preparation and implementation, several issues received special attention and continue to do so.

Issues of effectiveness and equity

Benchmarking and 'like' schools

The triennial review is an unashamedly comparative process: it seeks to compare one school's performance with that of other schools in Victoria. This however is not done through comparisons between individual schools, but rather through comparisons between one school's performance and a series of performance benchmarks. The Office of Review develops and publishes these benchmarks which specify statewide levels of performance and performance levels achieved by 'like' schools.

> The triennial review is an unashamedly comparative process: it seeks to compare one school's performance with that of other schools in Victoria through comparisons between one school's performance and a series of performance benchmarks.

The concept of 'like' schools has been developed to enable schools to take into account the composition of their student populations in assessing their own performance. The two main factors used to classify 'like' schools are the proportion of families in the school receiving the Education Maintenance Allowance or AUSTUDY[4] and the proportion of students who speak a language other than English at home. It should be noted that school funding in Victoria is based on a core component, with additional resources for levels of socio-economic and geographic disadvantage.

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[4] These are allowances made to the children of low-income families.

Benchmark data are presented in nine categories of 'like' schools. This enables schools to compare their performance to that of schools having similar population characteristics. Student achievement benchmarks are provided to schools for the Years Prep to 10 and for Years 11 and 12 through the Victorian Certificate of Education. Benchmarks available to schools also include: time allotted to each Key Learning Area (or subject); rates of student absence; student post-school destinations; staff opinion survey scale scores; staff absence rates; and retention rates of students to Year 12.

During a school review, schools are required to use the benchmark information to identify whether or not their own levels of performance are satisfactory, in the context of the performance demonstrated by other schools. Benchmarks also sharpen the focus of the external reviewer's diagnosis of a school's performance. For example, a school, which appears to be performing poorly in an absolute sense, might actually be achieving at a higher level than all other schools in its group. This insight enables reviewers to tailor their recommendations for improvement more accurately to the needs of the school.

Benchmarks are also used in combination to identify, if not the detailed causes, then at least the most strategic areas for further investigation of a school's poor performance. For example, a school with poor academic achievement levels might also demonstrate low scores in the staff survey in relation to the staff's perceptions of the support they receive from the school's leadership and/or from each other. In this case, a recovery strategy will begin with the leadership and management style and practices of the school principal and the senior team.

Ethics and equity

The accountability framework integrates a concern with equity and demands from schools specific attention to students at risk. Three points are worth stressing here.

- It encourages schools, in their charter, to specify the relationships between the values they espouse and the behaviour they expect from all members of the school community. It requires schools to be concerned about the learning progress and welfare of all students and, furthermore, to identify students at learning risk and to specify the actions they will take to support those students.
- The framework allows schools to adjust their performance levels for the characteristics of their student populations through the use of 'like' school benchmarks. In this way, unfair comparisons are avoided.
- The framework adopts a 'low stakes' approach to public information. Local communities are entitled to access to charters, annual reports and school review reports so that they can evaluate the performance of their school on the basis of objective and comprehensive information. The Office of Review does not publish information which will identify any individual school, in order to avoid labelling of schools as 'failing' or 'under-performing'.

Local communities are entitled to access to charters, annual reports and school review reports so that they can evaluate the performance of their school on the basis of objective and comprehensive information.

Measures of school-effectiveness: value added

The Victorian accountability framework offers two approaches to assessing the value schools add to the learning of their students. Bearing in mind the broadly accepted view that an effective school is one achieving results at a level higher than might be expected from the ability, prior achievement and socio-economic status of its students, the accountability framework: (i) takes into account socio-economic status through its use of 'like' school benchmarks of performance; (ii) provides schools with three-year trend performance data; and (iii) is developing three-year performance data relating to the achievement levels of specific cohorts of students. From 1999 onwards, schools will be able to track individual students and year-level cohorts in terms of their performance in the statewide testing programmes and to compare their progress with the progress across the state as a whole and in relation to 'like' school groups.

At this stage, there is no intention to try to develop a single 'value added' score for individual schools. Rather, it is the Department's intention to continue to combine the measures outlined in this paper with the professional judgements of school reviewers to reach an overall assessment of school performance.

It should be noted that a key issue in the 'value added' debates currently conducted internationally, is the relationship between assessing the value a school adds to student learning and minimum standards of competence in critical areas like literacy and numeracy. There has been an interesting and quite vigorous debate in England recently around several schools declared as underperforming by OFSTED inspections, but which appear to be doing quite well compared to their 'like' school group. Chris

Woodhead's response, as reported in the Times Educational Supplement, was typically direct: 'value adding' is fine, but students still have to be able to read, write and understand mathematics at an acceptable level. 'Value added' measures can start after that point.

The Department is starting to identify minimum standards of competence in literacy and numeracy for the early years of schooling and to require all schools to ensure their students meet these standards. Initiatives to support schools are being significantly funded by the government, which sees higher educational standards as essential to improving Victoria's international economic competitiveness.

Under-performing schools

Not surprisingly, the review process is beginning to identify schools that are performing poorly. Given that it is a process which uses comparative data based on benchmarks of actual performance, a certain level of under-performance is almost built into the system itself.

Under-performance in Victorian schools is a relative notion and generally relates to specific areas of performance rather than to the school as a whole.

In general, it is true to say that no Victorian school is failing all its students or is in such disarray that it is no longer functioning as an educational organization. Under-performance in Victorian schools is a relative notion and generally relates to specific areas of performance rather than to the school as a whole. Nevertheless, it has been necessary to develop processes to deal with these schools. These processes illustrate the value of the benchmarks used and of the interrelationships between the various elements of a school's operations.

A recently reviewed school provides a clear example. Its initial triennial review revealed poor performance in a number of areas, including low levels of morale and poor perceptions by the staff of the support they received from the leadership. With the support of the Department's regional manager, the school put in place several strategies to address the issues. The school's next annual report, when analyzed 12 months later by the Office of Review, indicated further deterioration in performance. The Office conducted a more detailed review of the school, involving interviews with parents, staff and students and the administration of several diagnostic tools. The results of this second review are interesting. They revealed a dedicated and hard-working staff, frustrated by their relationship with, what they perceived to be, an uncaring and unco-operative leadership. The school has in place several curriculum committees. These are staff committees to which the staff devotes considerable out-of-hours time. The committees have responsibility for developing teaching programmes and making recommendations about the structure of the school's curriculum. The main complaint of staff was that, having put in hours of work, their recommendations appeared to be ignored by the school leadership. Given that teachers in Victoria are highly educated, required to have at least one degree and one postgraduate qualification, the behaviour of the school leadership could not have been more destructive concerning morale, commitment and energy. The Department's regional manager now has the task of deciding whether further support or, rather, some form of sanction, will be the appropriate response.

Cost-effectiveness and feasibility

Implementation of any programme depends on how much it costs the exchequer. The cost considerations are particularly important for public programmes. The average cost of a school review is $A3,000 per school, with some variation related to geographical location.[5] This includes the cost of the contracted school reviewer and related expenses. The total cost to the Department of Education of the accountability framework, including Office of Review staff costs, all guidelines and publications and independent review costs, is approximately $A2.5 million annually. At an average of 550 schools reviewed per year, this approximates to $A4,500 per year per school. No analysis of school costs has been undertaken at this stage.

In terms of international benchmarks, it is interesting to note that the Office for Standards in Education in England spent $A180 million on school inspections in 1997 at an average cost per school of $A24,650. It can also be argued that the framework's focus on improved standards of learning for all students will realize a benefit in terms of social costs, by reducing the risk of students leaving school with inadequate literacy and numeric skills.

A key test of the feasibility of public-sector initiatives is what might be described as the 'test of scale'. In summary, this refers to the capacity of initiatives to be implemented in large-scale service delivery areas like schools or hospitals. The accountability framework is now implemented in all Victorian Government schools and over 1,300 schools have now participated in the review programme. Victoria is currently the only Australian state with a school planning, reporting and review framework in operation in all schools.

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[5] US$1=A$1.55 (January 2000 exchange rate).

Future directions

At this stage, there are two new directions proposed for the Victorian school accountability model:

Firstly, variation in the time between reviews based on the performance levels of schools will be possible. Schools which perform consistently well will have some say in the timing of their reviews within, probably, a five- to seven-year period.

The development of additional review and evaluation services, which might be offered to schools on a competitive basis, will be undertaken. These services will offer schools an opportunity to evaluate their core processes in significant detail as a means of planning more thoroughly for improved performance.

Secondly, development of additional review and evaluation services, which might be offered to schools on a competitive basis, will be undertaken. These services will offer schools an opportunity to evaluate their core processes in significant detail as a means of planning more thoroughly for improved performance. The Office of Review is now developing modules which will enable schools to examine their processes in teaching and learning, school governance, student management, staff management, resource management and community relations. The school will be able to administer these modules at any time and to include the results in its self-assessment.

In particular this last initiative will bring the work of the Office of Review into the next key area of school effectiveness. For one or two years, Professor Peter Hill and his colleagues at the University of Melbourne have been arguing, in company with other research groups internationally, that the key factor in variations between student learning achievement is the individual teacher. We have in our reviews helped schools to analyze their overall performance and to value the use of data in that analysis. It is hoped that the new modules, particularly in teaching and learning, will enable schools to move directly and strategically into the classroom by giving them a framework with which to evaluate the performance of each teacher.

As the schools become more and more autonomous, it will be increasingly important that the Office of Review is able to ask, on behalf of the government and the community, what schools have done to ensure that all their teachers are performing appropriately.

Conclusion

This paper has started by identifying several key characteristics of effective schools and linking those characteristics to processes which review and evaluate the performance of schools. The particular processes used in Victoria are of less importance than several main ideas. In the author's view, school efficiency and effectiveness reviews have most impact when:

- They diagnose the school as an entire organization. This means using sets of indicators which address all the core areas of a school's operations.
- The school is involved in, and has some ownership of, both the processes and their results, as teachers and schools are more likely to take seriously the results of processes in which they have some involvement.

- They have an improvement orientation. This inevitably involves some element of both 'carrot' and 'stick'. Ongoing poor performance must involve some sanctions, but schools might need to be given support to improve their own performance before sanctions are implemented. Sound professional judgements by government and Department of Education officials will always be necessary.
- They are based on quantitative data. Whole population-testing programmes for the school district or state or nation, whichever is appropriate, are essential for sound evaluation of school, teacher and student performance.
- They involve the clients of school education. This means parents and students, internal school clients like teachers and, although this is logistically difficult, which is the reason it has not yet been tackled in Victoria's own processes, the community and businesses.
- They are based on the best available research, models and evidence about what works in schools, in businesses and other organizations and in classrooms. A small warning: there are no 'right' models. Every school, every teacher and every nation will need to adapt whatever they have learned from others to their own circumstances. While there are some common characteristics of good teaching, there is no such thing as the right teaching method, particularly, if the author might be excused a moment of prejudice, one based on co-operative classroom group work.
- They are supported by common national, state or district curriculum frameworks which specify what is to be taught and learned and what standards of achievement are expected and which allow some flexibility of individual teachers to construct programmes to meet the learning needs of their students.

Appendix
School annual report measures

Student achievement

- Teachers' assessments of progress in English and mathematics. Standards used are outlined in the Curriculum and Standards Framework: Year Preparatory - Year 10.
- Average study scores: all studies Victorian Certificate of Education.
- Average study scores: English and mathematics: Victorian Certificate of Education.

Curriculum provision

- Time allocated in the curriculum to each of eight Key Learning Areas.

Parent and student opinion

- Scores on six parent survey scales using a 10 per cent random sample of the parent population.
- Scores on the 'Teachers and Teaching' scale using a random and representative sample of students.

Staff opinion

- Scores on five staff survey scales involving all staff.

Student absence

- Average annual rate of student absence by year level.

Post-school destinations

- Destination of students leaving school post Year 10, Year 11 and Year 12.

Apparent retention (secondary colleges only)

- Proportion of students beginning at Year 7 who remain to complete Year 12.
- Proportion of students beginning the Victorian Certificate of Education who remain at school to complete the certificate.

Other

- Staff participation in professional development.
- Number of student accidents by location.
- Staff absence.
- Annual financial statement.

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Evaluation of primary and secondary schools in Korea

*HyunSook Yu**

Introduction

According to the education law promulgated in 1949, Korea follows a 6-3-3-4 pattern of education, i.e. six years of elementary school, three years of middle school, three years of high school, and four years of college or university education. As stated by the law, "all citizens have the right to receive education according to their ability"; all children should receive at least primary education and compulsory education is guaranteed by law.

Pre-school education takes place in mostly privately run kindergartens for children aged between 3 and 5. Just over 20 per cent of 3 to 4 year-olds and about 40 per cent of 5 year-olds are enrolled. Education is compulsory and free from age 6 to 14, i.e. at elementary and middle-school levels (lower-secondary school). All elementary schools are co-educational. Over 99 per cent of elementary-school graduates seek and gain admissions to middle schools. Admission to middle schools within the district is facilitated through a computer-based lottery system. Admission to high schools (upper-secondary school) takes place on the basis of examination results and, where applicable, a 'school-life document' which documents a student's middle-school achievements and experiences. Parents must pay fees for high school.

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Educational administration is organized as follows (see Appendix): at the central level, the Ministry of Education (MOE) is responsible for the formulation and implementation of policies related to academic activities and public education. The MOE plans and co-ordinates educational policies at the central level, approves national curriculum, provides administrative and financial support for all schools, supports local educational authorities and national universities and is responsible for lifelong education. Local educational administration[1] consists of a dual ladder system, the provincial or metropolitan Offices of Education (OEs) and the District Offices of Education (DOEs). They are responsible for the direct management and supervision of primary and secondary schools in the respective regions.

The overall decision-making process was heavily centralized up until 1991. However, in response to the increasing need for local autonomy, the Local Educational Autonomy Law was promulgated in 1991. Consequently, educational administration has been decentralized and the MOE has delegated parts of the decision- and budget-planning process to the local authorities. Since the beginning of 1996, School Management Councils (SMCs) have been operating in every elementary and secondary school in order to guarantee autonomy in school management and to strengthen 'school community' relationships. Each SMC operates through a shared decision-making process and is comprised of 7 to 15 members, including teachers (30-40 per cent), parents (40-50 per cent), and community leaders and alumni (10-30 per cent). Parents and teachers are directly nominated by their peers, while community leaders are recommended by the SMC president and parents and teachers. SMCs deliberate on school bills, settle most financial accounts, propose subjects for elective courses and other educational programmes, review school charters and regulations and make decisions on post-school programmes.

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[1] 'Local' in this context means: the decentralized education administration.

Over time, the role of the SMCs will grow and encompass areas such as the appointment of principals and teachers, the management of contributions to the school development fund, and the utilization of other contributions from the regional community. Recently, SMCs were granted another important role: they now have the right to elect an OE superintendent and OE board members.

Over time, the role of the School Management Councils will grow and encompass areas such as the appointment of principals and teachers, the management of contributions to the school development fund, and the utilization of other contributions from the regional community.

This paper discusses the education evaluations system in Korea, an area in which the government has introduced many changes in the 1990s. This paper focuses on school and student evaluations, by different levels within the educational administration.

School evaluation

Korea, over a long period, did not conduct school evaluations as such. Until recently, evaluations were based on student performance and, in that sense, school evaluation was equated with student evaluation. Of late, the idea of institutional evaluation as an indispensable exercise has been gaining ground. As this new approach has only recently been introduced, some basic questions had to be asked: What is the ultimate goal of school evaluation? What is the relationship between school evaluation and improvement of educational quality? What are the links between school evaluation and existing student evaluation? and How should the professionalism and objectivity of the evaluation be achieved?

Partly in answer to these questions, a school evaluation system was developed at two levels: at the system level and at the school level. The Ministry of Education (MOE) administers the former and it targets the regional Offices of Education, while the latter is carried out by the regional Offices of Education themselves and deals directly with individual schools.

School evaluation by the Ministry of Education

School evaluations, as administered by the Ministry, operate as a part of the evaluation of the Offices of Education. The MOE has evaluated 16 provincial and metropolitan Offices of Education since 1996. The first goal of this evaluation is to assess the level of educational support given by each Office to the schools. In fact, it is clearly seen that the level of support directly impacts on school improvement. Consequently, evaluation committees visit schools as part of the evaluation process.

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Evaluations seek to make Offices of Education more accountable by evaluating their management and their goal-attainments. Evaluation results can lead to improvements in administrative efficiency, especially in resource allocation, and to co-operative competition among OEs, which leads to greater local autonomy.

Evaluation committees are composed of members from various fields. They include Ministry of Education personnel, school administrators, university professors, researchers and members of civic groups. There is no special qualification to be a member. Upon appointment by the Ministry, members are given postings for periods of one year. There are no intensive training courses to orient the selected persons to evaluate the schools. In 1998, 25 such evaluation committees were constituted. They were divided into four or five groups to conduct evaluations in their respective regional areas.

The evaluation determines whether administrative services are properly offered, and whether services for school improvement exist. It also measures how well local OEs carry out educational reforms introduced by the government. For example, the OE evaluation in 1998 focused on the implementation of educational reform by closely examining the efficiency of financial management and the functioning of school management committees. *Table 1* indicates the contents of the 1998 OE evaluation.

Table 1. The contents of provincial-metropolitan OE evaluation, 1998

Realms	Tasks	Points
Instructional reform (130 points)	• expanding open-education	50
	• relationship between elementary and secondary school	30
	• variety of secondary-school curriculum	50
Efficiency of financial management (130 points)	• finding resources	30
	• efficiency in distributing the educational resources and action plans	50
	• removing inefficiency of school facilities	20
	• variety of school facility	30

Construction of customer-centred school system (120 points) (by questionnaire)	• activation of School Management Councils • reducing private expenditures for learning • degree of customers' satisfaction	50 40 30
Reform of support system (120 points)	• tasks reflecting regional characteristics • educational computing • activation of lifelong and career education • restructuring of Office of Education • support for educational minorities	30 30 20 20 20
4 realms	15 tasks	500

* *Data source: MOE. The plans of 1998 OE evaluation. April, 1998.*

As can be seen from the table, the evaluation was based on a 500-point scale and covers four issues of more or less equal importance, with a slight bias towards the first two: instructional reform, financial management, the development of a customer-centred school system, and reforms in support systems for schools. The evaluation of each of these components is carried out following specific guidelines; allocations of resources and targeting of resources to selected areas are done on the basis of the evaluation results.

The evaluation process follows a number of steps, typically five.

During the first preparatory stage, the evaluation committee is constituted and the criteria for evaluation are presented by the MOE. This gives a chance for the members of the team to become familiar with the evaluation criteria and process. The MOE simultaneously distributes the evaluation guidelines to each OE. In stage 2, each OE submits documents according to the requests indicated in the guidelines. It is important to note that the OEs are required to present a number of documents, because the initial evaluation will be based on the documents and information provided to the committees by the OEs. The next stage in evaluation is the close scouting and detailed examination of these documents. After perusing the documents, the fourth stage of the evaluation consists of a field survey: the committees then visit all of the Offices of Education to cross-check the documents. During this stage, each committee also visits selected elementary and secondary schools within the OE's jurisdiction. The fifth and final stage of evaluation is the comprehensive evaluation. The MOE collects the results of written documentation and school visits to draw a final conclusion.

The Ministry classifies the evaluation results under various areas as indicated in *Table 1*. This allows for a more appropriate follow-up action. It may not be surprising to find that a particular Office is ranked high in one area but scores poorly in another. The financial support will be given on the basis of the ranking the Offices get. In 1998, a total of 150 billion won (over US$100 million) was allocated to the Offices of Education based on the results of the evaluation.

School evaluation by Offices of Education

In addition to the school evaluation which forms part of the assessment of the functioning and efficiency of the Offices of Education, these Offices themselves also undertake more direct evaluations of schools. These are directed at improving school quality and educational accountability. These evaluations began in 1996 but they are still not compulsory. Each

> Each Office of Education is becoming more engrossed in evaluating schools in order to be considered as a more supportive institution than the other offices. However, such concentration on evaluation tends to increase educational competition more than mutual support.

OE is becoming more engrossed in evaluating schools in order to be considered as a more supportive institution than the other offices. However, in an early phase such concentration on evaluation tends to increase educational competition more than mutual support.

The school evaluation process is co-ordinated by each Office of Education. That is, each OE is responsible for the preparation of evaluation areas, criteria and methods, and for setting up its own evaluation committees. The number of evaluation committees varies from region to region. Office of Education administrators, school principals and vice-principals, schoolteachers, university professors, researchers and parental representatives constitute the members of the evaluation committee. These members are expected to have a particular interest in education, although no special qualifications are needed. There is no special training course for the members either. Once appointed by their Office, they have several meetings to evaluate schools more efficiently, during which they discuss all the details concerning the evaluation.

Some Offices include the result of Scholastic Achievement Tests to assess the standard of a school, while others do not.

The content of the school evaluation as defined by Offices of Education is focused on matters directly related to the content of the Offices' evaluation by the Ministry. Although it is wider in content than the latter, it still does not deal with all the aspect of schools. For example, some Offices include the result of Scholastic Achievement Tests to assess the standard of a school, while others do not.

Table 2 shows the contents of the 1997 school evaluation by the Seoul metropolitan Office. This Office evaluated 523 elementary schools, 352 secondary schools and 274 high schools in 1997. The table shows that the committee inquires in detail mainly into academic and academic-related activities of the school.

Table 2. Contents of school evaluation by Seoul OE (1997)

	Realm	Tasks
Elementary school	Humanity-oriented education	• practising basic life norms and cultivating right attitude • strengthening guidance and counselling • leadership education
	Customer-centred curriculum	• curriculum autonomy and specialization • after-class activities • extra classes for the slow learners • students' need-based extra curriculum
	Open-education	• university of teaching and learning • use of performance evaluation • developing and using multimedia • efforts towards classroom improvement
Secondary school	Humanity-oriented education	• cultivating community consciousness and civil manners • action plan prohibiting school violence • strengthening guidance
	Customer-centred curriculum	• autonomy and specialization of curriculum • differentiated curriculum based on students' ability • strengthening after-class activities • action plan for the slower learners
	Reforming teaching/learning methods	• developing self-directed learning ability • improving instructional methods using multimedia • improving educational evaluation methods • strengthening in-class studies

High school (General)	Humanity-oriented education	• cultivating civil consciousness • action plan prohibiting school violence
	Customer-centred curriculum	• autonomy and specialization of curriculum • differentiated curriculum based on students' ability • strengthening after-class activities
	Reforming teaching/ learning methods	• developing self-directed learning ability • improving instructional methods using multimedia • improving educational evaluation methods • strengthening in-class studies

Evaluations are usually conducted annually, but sometimes once every two years. Similar to the OE evaluation by the MOE, schools are given a grade based on all fields and a list including all schools with their final rankings is compiled. The results of school evaluations are used as data for planning by, and consultation among, supervisors, and become the basis for providing financial rewards to superior schools.

> The results of school evaluations are used as data for planning by and consultation among supervisors and become the basis for providing financial rewards to superior schools.

Student evaluation

Besides these two school evaluation systems, between 1989 and 1998, the National Board of Educational Evaluation (NBEE) carried out national student evaluations. NBEE was first established in 1985 as a subsidiary component of the Ministry of Education to improve educational evaluation. NBEE has been responsible for developing a standardized test for national assessment of elementary and secondary-school students and for conducting the tests.

In 1998, the Korean Institute of Curriculum Evaluation (KICE) was established. Its main role is to develop the national curriculum for elementary and secondary education and to promote research and development in education evaluation. KICE took over student evaluation from NBEE in 1998. The national assessment is conducted by the KICE on a sample basis for students of elementary and secondary schools. Generally, grades and schools for evaluations are selected through random sampling. For example, evaluations may be carried out in Grades 4 and 6 in one year, and then in Grades 3 and 5 the following year. Normally, the sampling size for student evaluation will be around 1 per cent of the student population.

The National Assessment covers selected subjects. For example, at the elementary-school level, the Korean language, mathematics, and science are the main subjects. KICE is responsible for producing standardized evaluation instruments, evaluating and grading. Regional assessments are also undertaken for elementary and secondary schools. Participation by the schools is mandatory. Moreover, colleges and universities select their students on the basis of two elements: their composite score in the Scholastic Achievement Examination for College Entrance (SAECE), which is set by KICE, and their high school academic record.

As mentioned above, KICE is responsible for national curriculum development. It also conducts research to establish a curriculum evaluation system at the national level. Curriculum evaluation should have a close relationship with student evaluation. Therefore, KICE is developing a new curriculum evaluation model, which is closer to the existing national student assessment.

A summary of evaluation types

Table 3 summarizes the types of evaluation systems operational in Korea. As discussed above, institutional evaluation has two dimensions: evaluation of the functioning of individual schools, and the support provided by the Offices to make the schools function well. The specific committees constituted exclusively for that purpose undertake such school evaluation. The evaluation concerning functioning of individual schools is organized by the decentralized Offices of Education, while evaluation regarding support to the schools by these Offices is organized by the MOE. Until 1998, student evaluation was the responsibility of NBEE. Now, the KICE is responsible for student evaluation and it conducts these evaluations on a sample basis every year. This evaluation is also used in part to list students for university entrance. The Scholastic Achievement Examination for college entrance (SAECE) is set by the KICE. These student evaluations are over and above the academic record kept by the schools in the case of each student.

Table 3. Types of educational evaluation

Classification		Targets	Focus	Responsible
School evaluation	Type 1	Schools	Improvement of school quality and accountability	Offices of Education
	Type 2	Offices of Education	Upgrade educational accountability and examine the administrative support to each school	Ministry of Education
Student evaluation		Students	To assess students'achievement level in selected subjects; To test for university entrance examination	KICE
Curriculum evaluation		National curriculum	To evaluate national curriculum for all subjects and for all educational levels	KICE

School evaluation: problems and constraints

Eight different problems can be noted.

Firstly, *research and empirical studies related to school evaluation are scanty* and hence evaluations of elementary and secondary schools are undertaken without sufficient information regarding developments in the field. This gives immense scope for prolonged bureaucratic formalities. Even the areas for evaluation and criteria to evaluate schools tend to be selected more on the basis of administrative convenience and personal impressions, than on the basis of academic considerations regarding educational effectiveness and efficiency.

The areas for evaluation and criteria to evaluate schools tend to be selected more on the basis of administrative convenience and personal impressions, than on the basis of academic considerations regarding educational effectiveness and efficiency.

Secondly, there are on the whole *insufficient links* between the different types of evaluation. All types of evaluation, be it of school, student, or curriculum, should aim to improve the school quality and therefore, the linkages between these evaluation systems are paramount. However, they have not worked closely together. Student evaluation by KICE is not for all students but it is becoming an important indicator. At present, the opinions among scholars vary as to whether student evaluations should be included in school evaluations or not. Some insist that achievement is the most important factor in measuring educational effectiveness, while others insist that school evaluation should deal more with managerial issues and inclusion of student evaluation may divert the attention. Therefore, there is a need to develop the evaluation system in a more integrated fashion.

Thirdly, evaluation leads to *overwork among school staff.* The schools are not happy about the evaluation arrangement. They have to spend a lot of time making preparations for the visits of the evaluation committees, as they are required to prepare many documents within a short period of time. Teachers consider such preparatory activities as tiring and not very helpful.

Evaluation leads to overwork among school staff as they are required to prepare many documents within a short period of time. Teachers consider such preparatory activities as tiring and not very helpful.

A fourth problem concerns the *inappropriateness of the evaluation standards and content.* The standards for evaluation are so abstract that it is almost impossible for the evaluators to communicate with the schools. This happens partly due to the fact that contents are prepared and standards set without any research basis or proper assessment of the needs of those groups who have to use the results.

Fifthly, it is noticed that familiarity and acquaintance between members of the evaluation committee and the school principals or other school personnel affects evaluation outcomes. This may have an impact on *the reliability of the findings.* In addition, when university professors or researchers participate, they may lack interest and give their opinions reluctantly. The duration of an actual evaluation visit for each school is very short. After each school prepares the written, pre-evaluation documents, the evaluation team visits each primary and secondary school for only three or four hours in order to verify their contents.

Sixthly, each evaluation team consists of only four or five members. That number is not suitable for evaluating the diverse aspects of schools and cannot reflect the professional profile of each diverse evaluation area. Curriculum specialists, teachers, parents and management specialists are not fully active in the evaluation process. Consequently, the needs of the consumer are not being fully reflected. Moreover, due to a lack of proper references, these evaluations are *mainly based on subjective judgements or opinions*.

A seventh issue relates to the *lack of autonomy of schools* in this area. School evaluations should be carried out assuming autonomy in school management since the ultimate goal is to increase accountability in school management. However, the current school-based management policy is not established properly. Schools have little autonomy in curriculum development, financial and personnel management.

Finally, school evaluation is *too formal, almost bureaucratic* in its approach and dependent on documentation. The final results of evaluation are not open to the public, which could be a barrier to initiating efforts towards improvement. In addition, a follow-up management system is not established for the improvement of school evaluations.

Suggestions to further improve the evaluation procedure

The school evaluation system has yet to be more systematically scrutinized as there are disagreements on the areas, criteria and processes of evaluations. The following proposals could help to achieve this:

- School evaluations should be examined thoroughly in order to guarantee their appropriateness in real-life situations. Above all, the mood of our educational world should be understood and the negative side effects identified and resolved.
- In order to conduct school evaluation successfully, fairness and objectivity should be sought. Thus, evaluations would be reliable and their outcome acceptable by the school staff, parents, as well as local citizens. The content and standards of evaluation should be studied and developed through reasonable procedures so that their validity is guaranteed.
- The intended outcomes and utilization schemes for school evaluations and their findings must be clearly defined. School evaluation has to start with the goal of improving school management and expanding the use of the evaluation.
- The burden on schools should be minimized. Schools receive several visitors for regular inspection, supervision and school evaluation. But, to some extent, all these visits have similar goals. School evaluations should integrate all of these activities.
- The characteristics of each school should be reflected in the evaluation results. In the current school evaluation, every school submits a similar kind of document and follows standardized evaluation processes. This neither reflects the diversity of managerial aspects, nor the historical and geographical backgrounds of each school. Schools in cities differ from those in the

There is a need to organize pre-service and in-service training for principals, teachers and supervisors to reinforce their preparation for school evaluations.

countryside. Even within a city, schools have different characteristics. There are many differences between public and private schools that the school evaluation should reflect.

- Planning and management should not be evaluated at the same time. In order to attain maximum reliability, planning should be evaluated first, followed by management. Under the current blanket evaluation, it is difficult to see if schools manage to follow their plans.
- There is a need to organize pre-service and in-service training for principals, teachers and supervisors to reinforce their preparation for school evaluations. Similarly, teachers and supervisors must adopt a positive and active attitude, rather than a negative and passive attitude about school evaluations.
- In order to guarantee fairness and professionalism in school evaluations, a special organization should be set up. It would reform models of evaluation, modify and supply standards or indices on a regular basis and grant certificates to well-performing schools.

To conclude, there should be a consensus about the goals and philosophy of school evaluation. Although the declared purpose of school evaluation is to improve quality and school efficiency, so far there is little evidence of such quality improvement. To elicit a public consensus on the purpose of school evaluations, the concept of 'good' or 'quality' schools should be clearly defined. It is also necessary to minimize the negative side effects of school evaluation. The results of school evaluations

To elicit a public consensus on the purpose of school evaluations, the concept of 'good' or 'quality' schools should be clearly defined.

might inordinately promote a stress on administrative and financial aspects, while school staff will prepare just for externally imposed and formal aspects of school management. This leads to the neglect of key issues. All evaluation of schools, students and curriculum should fall under improving school quality and efficiency and there should be clearly established links between the evaluations of these three crucial elements in the functioning of schools.

Appendix
The administrative structure

Ministry of Education

→ educational policy
→ national curriculum
→ administrative and financial support for schools
→ support of local educational authorities
→ national universities
→ lifelong education

Offices of Education

7 metropolitan and 9 provincial offices Superintendent: executive body Board of Education: decision-making body

→ management and supervision of high schools
→ supervision of direct Offices of Education

District Offices of Education

181 city and country offices Intendant: executive body

→ Management and supervision of primary and secondary schools

School Management Councils

→ School budget bills
→ Financial accounts
→ Elective subjects and other education programmes
→ school charters and regulations

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Annex 1

Opening speech by
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Energizing schools

(Extracts from the address by Professor W.A. Wiswa Warnapala, Deputy Minister of Education and Higher Education, at the inauguration of the Policy Seminar on 'Improving school efficiency', which appeared as an article in the Sri Lankan 'Daily News' of 20 January 1999)

It is a pleasure to inaugurate this regional Policy Seminar on 'Improving school efficiency' which is being organized by ANTRIEP, a network of Asian training and research institutes working in the field of educational planning. The very fact that this seminar is being held in Sri Lanka is most welcome, as our nation has, in recent years, undertaken several reforms in the planning and management of education, with the improvement of the school as leitmotif.

Our country has realized the unique achievement of nearly universal literacy and primary school enrolment, making it unmatched in the South Asian context. Macro-level statistics relating to Sri Lanka's education system are impressive; it covers a formal school sector consisting of 4.3 million children. About 99 per cent of the total number of schools are run by the government. The government continues to play a principal role in education funding. In 1994, education expenditures accounted for 3 per cent of the GDP and this is to be increased to 3.8 per cent. In the period 1995-1998, school infrastructure facilities have been expanded through a variety of projects.

Despite these vast strides, the current situation reveals that there are major problems which need to be addressed in the near future if Sri Lanka is to maintain its comparative advantage of a highly literate population. Unlike in the countries of South Asia, Sri Lanka's current problems relate to quality, equal access and efficiency in education. The school drop-out rate is nearly 13 per cent and it is, in fact, a major problem within the system. Of the children who enter the system, 25 per cent leave it at or before Year 5; another 15 per cent at or before Year 8; and a further 48 per cent before Year 11.

These statistics amply demonstrate that the quality of education in Sri Lanka is declining and this trend needs to be arrested through a concerted strategy of reforms which should include a plan for the improvement of school efficiency.

Several important facts contribute to this decline in quality and efficiency in education, and the two most important relate to resources and teachers.

A first problem is the lack of resources for the improvement of quality education in Sri Lanka. For example, expenditure on necessary inputs such as teaching materials, school supplies, facilities and organization and methods have been too low, and yet another factor contributing to this process is the unequal distribution of resources among schools. This is especially apparent in the plantation-sector schools, which have remained neglected for more than a century and face severe hardships in terms of resources.

Another constraint affecting the efficiency of the system is the expenditure on the recruitment of teachers. Due to unplanned recruitment policies, total teacher salaries constitute a large proportion of the budget. Teacher absenteeism is a common problem and this is a terrible malaise within the formal school sector. The allocation of teachers to schools does not logically correspond to the demand and, due to a lack of proper deployment policy, certain schools remain understaffed for years and this has accounted for their decline in efficiency. In the less developed, backward, rural areas and in urban slum areas, teachers remain in short supply compared to the resources available in urban areas.

In recognition of these problems, the government has very recently announced a series of reforms with a view to improving school efficiency.

The criterion of efficiency is most easily understood in its application to commercial organizations that are largely guided by the profit motive. In our context, efficiency involves the maximization of benefits in the importation of quality education to a growing generation of young men and women. The question is to probe into the factors which interfere with the improvement of school efficiency.

In the past, before the Sri Lankan system of education became a monopoly of the state, there was a view in the country that the private schools, especially the schools established by the religious denomination, functioned efficiently. With the conversion of the system into a state monopoly, there is the belief that the efficiency within the schools declined. There are various factors that support as well as oppose this assertion, but the fact remains that there was a decline in efficiency largely because of the impediments associated with the sudden expansion of the system of education in the country.

One cannot expect all schools, especially in the context of social and economic diversities, to function in a uniform way, as was possible when the system was smaller. Since this seminar proposes to contribute to the development of policies that will improve the efficiency in schools in the region, I would like to devote my attention to some of the issues which we hope to solve through the present package of educational reforms in Sri Lanka.

Under curriculum developments, we have planned a series of changes which include development assessment and revision of the curriculum with a view to improving teaching methods and assessing students' achievement.

Yet another objective is to devise a textbook and publication policy to improve the content, quality and the availability of textbooks catering for all subjects. The aim is to evolve an integrated national textbook and publication policy. There will be a library development programme with a view to stimulating the reading habit in schools and community, through a well-structured school library service.

The most significant component is in the area of Education Management, the objective of which is to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of the system. In our system, this aspect did not receive much emphasis due to the impact of *ad hoc* changes in the structure. Management development at every level will be one strategy to improve the efficiency within the system and school-based management will be introduced to provide greater institutional freedom to develop schools as community-based organizations.

Supervision will be strengthened by the introduction of self-evaluation in schools. Can this be easily achieved? Given our political culture and the nature of the socio-economic environment, there are various constraints which one has to surmount. Some crucial ones relate to our teachers. In the era of teacher education, several important measures are to be adopted. A National Authority on Teacher Education has been established for overall policy formulation, for the purpose of establishing an integrated national teacher education system in such areas as deployment, quality, efficiency, cost-effectiveness, nationalization, co-ordination and standardization. All untrained teachers in service will be trained to improve their quality and efficiency. A programme will be launched for the purpose of appraisal of teacher performance.

If all these objectives are to be realized within a specific time-frame, the country needs a proper hierarchy of supervision. It is proposed to re-organize the Ministry and the principal administrative structure. What is the existing organization of school supervision in the country? Is it an adequate organization in terms of its functions? In the system of supervision, the hierarchy is as follows:

Central Ministry – Education officer
Provincial – Education officer
Zonal – Education officer
Divisional – Education officer
School cluster – Master teacher

In my view, this scheme is not effective at all. In certain cases, many officers do not visit a single school within a year, with the Master teacher being the worst culprit.

The role of the principal is still not professional enough and must undergo a radical transformation. Principals need to be motivated to play effective leadership-management roles, as in the past. As the key administrators in the system, they have to facilitate the learning-teaching situation, implement the curriculum and co-ordinate school-community relations. As in the past, the principal should be given the freedom to develop his own style of management and style of leadership, but it needs to be carried out with responsibility. Unfortunately, sometimes the political atmosphere of the school environment interferes with such a role.

Trade unions operate within the teacher profession and their impact is reflected on school activities because of interpersonal rivalries among teachers. Deployment policies cannot be radically constructed because of trade union activities and due to the politicization of these unions and their memberships. In the past, Sri Lanka witnessed trade unions entering all areas of activities in the school sector, including the determination of promotions, postings and deployment of teachers, and such a trend eventually destroyed the efficiency within the school system. In my view, at this stage of the development of education, certain courageous decisions have to be adopted to improve efficiency within the formal school sector, and it is only through such decisions that the system can be salvaged to achieve the objectives of education reforms.

It is my hope that the reflection and discussions of this seminar will help us – and our colleagues in other countries - in defining the policies and strategies which will lead to improved school efficiency.

Annex 2

Opening statement by G. Carron*

The title of this seminar, 'Improving school efficiency', might seem an evident one. Indeed, the focus of educational planners and managers should be on improving schools, ensuring that children learn and leave schools with sufficient knowledge not just to survive, but to develop, improve.and transform their living conditions individually and collectively. However, at closer inspection, this title is less obvious.

> *Firstly, why did we not propose: improving the education system's efficiency rather than the school efficiency?*

As educational planners, it is often easier for us to work at the level of the system rather than at that of the individual school. For several decades, educational planners have attempted to improve schools by simply reforming the system from above. However, these massive system-wide reforms in areas such as teacher training, curriculum development, school construction or teaching equipment have all too seldom had significant impact on what goes on in the classroom. At the same time, various studies have shown that actions taken by actors at the school level, that is to say by the headteacher, the teachers and parents, have made a difference. Schools, situated in the same environment and faced with similar problems, arrive at very different results, because of the way in which they are managed. A recent research project carried out by the IIEP has tried to pin down in more detail which factors help in explaining the differences between well-performing and poorly performing schools in different development contexts.

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* Senior Programme Co-ordinator, IIEP.

The main conclusion of this project is that basic input factors such as: infrastructure and equipment; the availability and qualification of the teaching staff; and the composition of the learners, have their importance in explaining differences in quality, but only a relative one. Much more important than those are the nature and type of human interactions that have a direct or indirect influence on the teaching/learning processes taking place in the classroom:

- the in-school relations: that is to say the formal and informal relations between colleagues and, in particular, the leadership role played by the headteacher;
- the relations with the parents who, after all, are the most direct partners of the teachers in educating the children;
- the relations with the overall administration and, in particular, the type of supervision and support services provided to the teachers and headteachers for carrying out their respective tasks.

The realization that the actions and interactions at school level are crucial to the success of schools has led a growing number of governments to give schools the right to organize themselves more independently, with more freedom and autonomy. Such a policy was visible first in more developed countries, such as the UK, several states in the USA, and New Zealand. Probably one of the most radical reforms has occurred in the State of Victoria in Australia and the seminar will give some attention to that reform. Similar policies are now being advocated in an increasing number of countries, whatever their level of development or their historical background. Everywhere, however, fundamental questions remain about the precise impact on the quality of schools and about the conditions under which greater autonomy will lead to greater school efficiency. Which programmes and which strategies should accompany a trend towards school autonomy to ensure that schools become more efficient? This question should be the central interrogation of this seminar.

Secondly, what is meant by 'school efficiency'?

In general, and justifiably so, we think of an efficient school as one where *students obtain good results*, where they succeed. Central authorities, or 'system managers', as they can be called, are primarily concerned with student achievement when they talk about monitoring school efficiency. The main indicator that they use in that respect refers precisely to the results of pupils or tests and examinations. At the same time, this emphasis on examinations is being heavily discussed and criticized in many countries. The most obvious criticisms which are formulated, are that an exaggerated concentration on test results leads to a narrowing down of the education programmes and practices and to the marginalization and exclusion of pupils whose success in examination is not guaranteed. This last tendency, which is the subject of current debates, for instance in the United Kingdom but also elsewhere, implies that schools might well end up by deviating from what should be their main and most noble task, namely educating those children who need teaching the most. The questions are evident: while schools need to be evaluated, what should the criteria be? What other indicators, in addition to student examination results, should be taken into consideration when we try to define an efficient school? How can we make sure that system-level testing and evaluation of learners actually result in improving the quality of the teaching/learning processes in schools?

For us, 'efficiency' also implies – and this will not be surprising, in view of what was said before – *a well-managed school.* In other words, a school where the headteacher or the director succeeds in developing positive, beneficial relationships within the school, between teachers and with students, and with the community; a school with a constructive atmosphere and a good climate, where children and teachers are happy to learn and to teach. To make children and teachers feel happy in school might already be called an achievement in itself, but we also know from experience and research that schools where this is the case also achieve better results. However, questions remain regarding the conditions under which such a positive climate can be obtained and regarding the role of the headteacher in this respect. The experience of the few headteachers present here, will be valuable input when this and other related issues will be addressed during the seminar.

Finally, when talking about 'efficiency', we may also want to keep in mind that good management and *successful results should be arrived at, at a reasonable cost.* And in the first instance this means at reasonable social cost. As mentioned earlier, increasing school efficiency should not lead to increasing exclusion and inequity. Secondly, and speaking maybe more as a traditional educational planner, we want schools to be affordable in financial terms, both to the system and to the parents who want to send their children to school. But, this argument should not be misused. The present mood which goes against state intervention and – sometimes uncritically – defends private initiative and market forces as the one and only way forward, should not be used as an additional argument to limit the financial responsibility of the central authorities and simply shift the burden of education to the schools. Schools are increasingly asked to find their own resources, to ensure their own financing among parents and the community at large. For certain schools which are poor this policy then becomes synonymous with abandonment. It is crucial that institutions that receive more responsibilities also receive the human and financial resources and the support needed to make beneficial use of their autonomy.

This brings in a much broader question regarding the new role of the central authorities within a context of increased school autonomy: what is this role in terms of quality control, ensuring sufficient unity, guaranteeing equity, defining overall policies and strategies, etc.? Within the context of this seminar it is proposed that we examine the changes required in these specific management functions which have a key role to play in monitoring school efficiency: supervision and support, evaluation and assessment and, finally, teacher management.

Dear colleagues,

These are some of the background questions and preoccupations behind our seminar. I am sure that the diversified and rich experience gathered around this table will allow us not only to *clarify the issues at stake* but also to *identify some innovative ways and strategies* to address the policy questions and management issues listed in our programme.

And, finally, from the ANTRIEP perspective, we can also expect that this seminar will offer us a basis for our deliberations next Friday when the ANTRIEP member institutions will discuss how to adapt their capacity-building efforts to the changing management needs in the region.

Thank you for your attention.

Annex 3
Programme

Monday 14 December	
6.30 – 7.30 p.m.	Preparatory session: presentation of the programme and distribution of dossiers
Tuesday 15 December	
8.30 – 9.00 a.m.	Registration
9.00-10.00 a.m.	**Opening session:** • Message from Mr Kwak (Acting President KEDI and Chairperson ANTRIEP) • Speech by Mr Carron (Senior Programme Co-ordinator, IIEP) • Opening speech by Hon. Professor Viswa Warnapala, Deputy Minister of Education and Higher Education, Sri Lanka
10.00-10.30 a.m.	Coffee break
10.30-11.00 a.m.	Presentation of the programme by Mr De Grauwe (IIEP)
11.00-12.30 a.m.	**Theme 1: Trends towards school autonomy in the region: identification of main issues** Session 1: Moving towards school autonomy • Introductory remarks by Mr Govinda (India) • The case of Sri Lanka: presentation by Mr Perera (Sri Lanka) • Discussion

2.00-5.30p.m.

Session 2: Sharing of national experiences in moving towards school autonomy

- Open discussion on a number of crucial issues
- Concluding remarks by Mr Govinda (India)

Wednesday 16 December

9.00-10.00 a.m.

Theme 2: Internal school management and school efficiency

Session 1: The role of the headteacher and the community: introductory presentations

- Introductory presentation on strengthening the role of the headteacher, by Ms Pefianco (Philippines)
- Introductory presentation on involving communities in school management by Mr Bajracharya (Nepal)

10.30-12.30 a.m.

Session 2: The role of the headteacher and the community: group discussions

- Group 1: Strengthening internal school management and the role of the headteacher
- Group 2: The role of the community in improving school efficiency

Wednesday 16 December

2.00-3.30 p.m.

Theme 3: School supervision and school efficiency

Session 1: Introductory presentations

- Conclusions of a regional research project on supervision by Mr Anton De Grauwe (IIEP)
- Supervision in BRAC's education programme: an innovative approach by Mr Hasan (Bangladesh)

4.00-5.30 p.m.	Session 2: Plenary discussions and exchange of experiences
Thursday 17 December	
8.30-10.00 a.m.	**Theme 4: School evaluation and school efficiency** Session 1: Plenary session • Introductory presentation on evaluation procedures in the State of Victoria by Mr Griffiths (Australia) • Introductory presentation on evaluation procedures in Korea by Ms Yu (Korea)
10.30-12.00 a.m.	Session 2: Working group sessions • Group 1: Evaluating schools in a context of growing autonomy • Group 2: Monitoring schools through indicator systems
1.30-3.30 p.m.	**Theme 5: Teacher management and school efficiency** (joint session with the IIEP Workshop on Teacher management in Asia)
4.00-5.00 p.m.	**Concluding session** • Highlights of the seminar by the rapporteurs • Concluding remarks by Mr Carron (IIEP).

Annex 4

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Annex 5

List of abbreviations

ANTRIEP	Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning
ATEO	Assistant Thana Education Officer (Bangladesh)
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CERID	Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development
DOE	District Office of Education (Korea)
ERD	Education for Rural Development (Nepal)
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
KEDI	Korean Educational Development Institute
KICE	Korea Institute of Curriculum Evaluation
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education (Sri Lanka)
MOE	Ministry of Education
NAEM	National Academy for Educational Management
NBEE	National Board of Educational Evaluation (Korea)
NEC	National Education Commission (Sri Lanka)
NIE	National Institute of Education (Sri Lanka)

NIEPA	National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
OE	Office of Education (Korea)
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education (England)
SBM	School-based management
SIEMAT	State Institute of Educational Management and Training
SLEAS	Sri Lanka Education Administrative Service
SMC	School Management Committee/Council
SMT	Senior Management Team (Sri Lanka)
SSM	School-site Management

The ANTRIEP Network

The Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning (ANTRIEP), which currently brings together 17 institutions, offers an innovative answer to the question of how to strengthen national capacities in training and research in educational management. Without capacity building, policies and programmes to improve the quality of education will have little chance of survival, let alone success. In its five years of existence, the ANTRIEP network has grown to be a concrete and creative example of South-South co-operation.

The overall objective of the network is to create synergy between the participating institutions to enable them to respond better to the growing and increasingly diversified needs for skill development in educational planning and management in the Asian region. More specifically, the network has the following operational objectives:

– the regular exchange of technical information amongst members about specific issues relating to capacity building in educational planning and management;

– the continuous upgrading of knowledge and skills amongst professionals in the participating institutions by learning from each other's experience;

– the instigation of co-operative research and training activities in areas of common interest.

List of current member institutions

– *National Academy for Educational Management* (NAEM), Dhaka, Bangladesh

– *Campaign for Popular Education* (CAMPE), Dhaka, Bangladesh

– *Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee* (BRAC), Dhaka, Bangladesh

– *Shanghai Institute of Human Resource Development* (SIHRD), Shanghai, People's Republic of China

– *National Council of Educational Research and Training* (NCERT), New Delhi, India

– *National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration* (NIEPA), New Delhi, India

– *Centre for Multi-Disciplinary Development Research*, CMDR, Dharwad, Karnataka, India

– *State Institute of Educational Management and Training* (SIEMAT), Uttar Pradesh, India

– *Office for Educational and Cultural Research and Development* (Balitbang Dikbud), Jakarta, Indonesia

– *Korean Educational Development Institute* (KEDI), Seoul, Republic of Korea

– *Institut Aminuddin Baki*, Pahang, Malaysia

– *Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development* (CERID), Kathmandu, Nepal

– *National Centre for Educational Development* (NCED), Kathmandu, Nepal

– *Academy of Educational Planning and Management* (AEPAM), Islamabad, Pakistan

– *Centre for Education Management Development* (CEMD), *National Institute of Education*, (NIE), Maharagama, Sri Lanka

– *Regional Centre for Educational Innovation and Technology, South East Asian Ministers of Education Organization* (SEAMEO, INNOTECH), Quezon City, the Philippines

– *International Institute for Educational Planning* (IIEP), UNESCO, Paris

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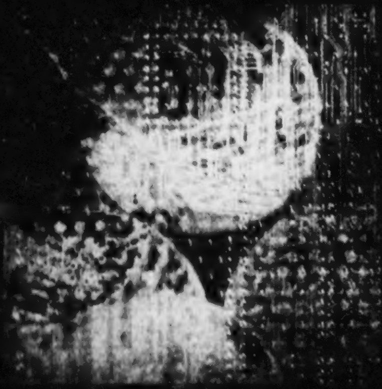

International Institute for Educational Planning / UNESCO

ISBN 92-803-1195-6

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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(9/92)